

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

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Vol. CLXIII. }

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Single Numbers of THE LIVING AGE, 18 cents.

A DAY IN EARLY SUMMER.

A LITTLE wood, wherein with silver sound
A brooklet whispers all the sunny day,
And on its banks all flow'rets which abound
In the bright circle of the charmed May:
Primroses, whose faint fragrance you may
know
From other blooms; the oxlips, whose sweet
breath
Is kissed by windflowers — star-like gems
which blow
Beside pale sorrel, in whose veins is death;
Larch-trees are there, with plumes of palest
green;
And cherry, dropping leaves of scented
white;
While happy birds, amid the verdant screen,
Warble their songs of innocent delight.
Surely they err who say life is not blest;
Hither may come the weary and have rest.
Chambers' Journal. J. C. H.

HOPE ON, HOPE EVER.

HOPE on, hope ever. Though dead leaves are
lying
In mournful clusters 'neath your wandering
feet;
Though wintry winds through naked boughs
are sighing
The flowers are dead; yet is the memory
sweet
Of summer winds and countless roses glowing
'Neath the warm kisses of the generous sun.
Hope on, hope ever. Why should tears be
flowing?
In every season is some victory won.
Hope on, hope ever, though you deck loved
tresses
With trembling fingers for the silent grave;
Though cold the cheek beneath your fond
caresses,
Look up, true Christian soul; be calm, be
brave!
Hope on, hope ever. Though your hearts be
breaking,
Let flowers of resignation wreath your
cross,
Deep in your heart some heavenly wisdom
waking,
For mortal life is full of change and loss.
Hope on, hope ever, for long-vanished faces
Watch for your coming on the golden shore,
E'en while you whisper in their vacant places
The blessed words, "Not lost, but gone be-
fore!"
Hope on, hope ever, let your hearts keep sing-
ing,
When low you bend above the churchyard
sod,
And fervent prayers your chastened thoughts
are winging,
Through sighs and tears, to the bright throne
of God!

Hope on, hope ever. Let not toil or sorrow
Still the sweet music of Hope's heavenly
voice.
From every dawn some ray of comfort borrow,
That in the evening you may still rejoice.
Hope on, hope ever — words beyond compar-
ing,
Dear to the hearts that nameless woes have
riven;
To all that mourn, sweet consolation bearing.
Oh, may they prove the Christian's guide to
heaven!

Chambers' Journal.

HOURS, weeks, and days bring round the
golden moon;
While I still wait: I 'mid these solemn firs,
Late-flowering meadows and grey mountain
spurs,
Watch summer fade and russet hues im-
brune
The stern sad hills. All while thy smooth
lagoon
Invites me; like a murmured spell recurs,
When south winds breathe and the cloud-
landscape stirs,
One sombre sweet Venetian slumberous
tune.
Arise: ere autumn's penury be spent;
Ere winter in a snow-shroud wrap the year;
Ere the last oleanders droop and die;
Take we the rugged ways that southward lie;
Seek by the sea those wide eyes sapphire-
clear,
Those softened stars, that larger firmament.
J. A. SYMONDS.

THE CHORISTER.

SNOW on the high-pitched minster roof and
spire:
Snow on the boughs of leafless linden-trees:
Snow on the silent streets and squares that
freeze
Under night's wing down-drooping nigh and
nigher.
Inside the church, within the shadowy choir,
Dim burn the lamps like lights on vaporous
seas;
Drowsed are the voices of droned litanies;
Blurred as in dreams the face of priest and
friar.
Cold hath numbed sense to slumber here!
But hark,
One swift soprano, soaring like a lark,
Startles the stillness; throbs that soul of
fire,
Beats around arch and aisle, floods echoing
dark
With exquisite aspiration; higher, higher,
Yearns in sharp anguish of untold desire.
J. A. SYMONDS.

From The Quarterly Review.
JOHN DE WITT.*

THESE volumes record the events of a life of high renown in a memorable age. John de Witt was not the most illustrious of the soldiers and statesmen who, in the seventeenth century were placed at the head of the Dutch republic; but there is not a more noble and impressive figure in that long procession of distinguished worthies. The grand pensionary had not, indeed, all the qualities of a born ruler of men; and his training and habits were not of a kind that removed the inherent defects in his character. He had not the quick intuitive genius which seizes the occasion at great crises, and adjusts the course of the State to it; and, though capable of heroic conduct, he was rather too prone to a policy of device, or compromise, and of attending events, which he sometimes failed to foresee or to master. With an intellect, too, more serene than vivid, and essentially that of a philosophic jurist, he was apt to forget how passion and feeling blind nations, like men, to their real interests; and being a member of a great middle class, accomplished and learned but somewhat exclusive, he was at this disadvantage in conducting affairs, that he was not versed in the intrigues of courts, and that he stood aloof from popular sympathies. And yet this eminent man ruled the Seven Provinces, during a long period of danger abroad and trouble at home, with a success that must be pronounced remarkable; and the commonwealth, under his auspicious policy, attained its highest degree of power and greatness. The republic seemed on the verge of ruin through revolution and a destructive war, when he took in his hand the reins of government; but he extricated it from this extremity of peril; and he enabled it ere long to assume a position of formidable weight among the powers of Europe. He was, besides, the principal author of the celebrated league which, for the first time, checked the ambitious violence of Louis XIV.; and he may be said to have prepared the way for the grand alliances

which, at last, set bounds to the immoderate power and pretensions of France. Though he failed, too, at the end of his career to free his country from foreign invasion, it is now known that he in no sense merited the furious obloquy that broke out against him, and that led to his calamitous death; his exertions, indeed, for the defence of the State, if somewhat tardy, deserve high praise, and were frustrated only by causes beyond the control of men at a disastrous time; and, in fact, he cemented the very alliances, through which, under his famous successor, the republic ultimately emerged from danger. He accomplished all these things, moreover, though he ruled the commonwealth with a doubtful title; and though, during the whole time of his power, he was opposed and thwarted by a large party in the State, and by a pretender of imposing claims, the efforts of both being a continual source of division, strife, and national weakness. Nevertheless, though great as a man of action, it is chiefly as a far-sighted thinker that John de Witt claims the attention of history. He was the most judicious statesman of his time; the one who most clearly perceived what were the permanent interests of the States of Europe, apart from passing and disturbing influences; and in this respect he was like Richelieu, but Richelieu without his hard craft and ambition. The counsels he offered to Louis XIV., though given with a view to national interests, remain a monument of his sagacious insight, and attest his deep political wisdom. Had not the great king, in the pride of his power, turned a deaf ear to the Dutch statesman, William III. might never have ruled these kingdoms, and England, perhaps, would not have attained the supremacy on the seas she has so long enjoyed. On the other hand, France would have been spared the fierce and protracted strife with Europe, which left her exhausted at the Peace of Utrecht; her sovereign would have died the chief of the Continent; and the seeds might never have grown on her soil, of which the Revolution was the deadly harvest.

The life and career of John de Witt are not, we believe, well known in England,

* *Jean de Witt, Grand Pensionnaire de Hollande.* Par M. Antonin Lefèvre Pontalis. Paris, 1884.

partly because most of the accounts of them were written in the Dutch tongue; and partly because his fame has suffered from the discredit that follows a defeated cause. We eagerly turned to these volumes to ascertain if they were worthy of the theme, but we cannot say very much in their favor. M. Pontalis, no doubt, has toiled hard at his work; he has collected materials of real value from the library and the archives of the Hague, from the correspondence of the De Witt family, and from State papers in London and Paris; and the Duc d'Aumale, with characteristic kindness, has placed at his disposal a number of letters of the Great Condé, preserved at Chantilly, which throw fresh light on the invasion of Holland. The author's researches on other points have also produced some fruitful results; we would especially refer to important details contained in the De Witt papers, respecting the policy of the grand pensionary, and his preparations for the defence of the States, before the campaign of 1672; and many incidents of the frightful tragedy, in which the brothers De Witt perished and William III. succeeded to power, have been disclosed, for the first time, in these pages. The book, however, is in some respects disappointing; it is a dull chronicle, and not a biography connecting important events in history; it is a mere assemblage of ill-digested facts, not the well-ordered work of a skilful artist. Notwithstanding his long and assiduous labors, M. Pontalis has failed to place before us the living images of John de Witt, of the remarkable men who shared his councils, and of the statesmen with whom he played for nearly twenty years the great game of politics; and Mazarin and Cromwell, Charles II. and Temple, De Lionne, Louis XIV., and Louvois, nowhere stand out on his crowded canvas in their personality and true lineaments. His narrative, too, is confused and obscure; it is, no doubt, difficult to describe clearly the shifts and moves on the stage of Europe, of which the Peace of Breda, the Triple Alliance, the Treaty of Dover, and the war of 1672, were only the outward and visible signs; but we seek in vain for a clue in this book

to that intricate maze of intrigue and statecraft, in which John de Witt played a conspicuous part. Even external events are badly depicted; and such striking scenes as the great naval battles between the fleets of the States and of England from 1652 to 1666, and the memorable campaign of 1672, are feebly and indistinctly portrayed. We must add that mistakes in names abound, which we charitably hope are errors of the press; * and the book, in a word, is another example of a singular fact in the literature of our day, how the French intellect, ever in extremes, has forsaken its methods of the last century in the province of history and kindred studies, and contents itself with amassing details, without an attempt to generalize, or to observe the rules of art, order, or clear arrangement.

John de Witt was born in 1625. The family of the future head of the commonwealth had been originally feudal nobles; but, like many of their order, they had turned from the land to commerce in the sixteenth century; and they had long formed a part of the high burgher caste, which had freely lavished its wealth and its blood in the protracted struggle with the monarchy of Spain. Jacob de Witt, father of his illustrious son, had, like many of his ancestors, filled offices in the governing bodies of his native town, Dort; and he had even risen to high place in the States, for he was an ambassador from the republic to the court of Sweden. The boy was brought up with the attentive care bestowed by his class in that day on their offspring; he was sent at an early age to the high school of Dort, a seminary of European fame, and in time he became a student at Leyden, the chief university of the seventeenth century. Young John gave proof at these places of learning, of great industry, and the finest parts; he showed an extraordinary turn for law, especially in its noblest branch, developed lately by the hand of Grotius; and he not

* We mention some of these, and could mention more: Vol. i., p. 7, "Spinosa" for "Spinola;" p. 143, "Askue" for "Ascue;" p. 371, "Robert" for "Rupert;" p. 378, "Hartman" for "Harman;" p. 402, "Sherness" for "Sheerness." Vol. ii., p. 103, "Osery" for "Osory;" p. 314, "Solsbay" for "Solebay."

only mastered mathematics with ease, but displayed much aptitude in applying the science to numerous inventions of his ingenious countrymen. The influences, too, which surrounded the youth in the circle of home were well fitted to make the student a cultivated man of the world. At this period many eminent men of letters in France held close relations with the aristocracy of the burghers of the States; Montaigne and other distinguished Frenchmen had found an asylum or home in the Provinces, and the philosophy and manners of France flourished at Dort and other chief towns of Holland. John de Witt, in his teens, had the great advantage of mixing with this brilliant society; he became a disciple and friend of Descartes; and the French sympathies, which he felt through life, were largely due to the memories of these days. As the high burgher, too, like the noble of Venice, received a very comprehensive training, John de Witt became versed in many accomplishments; he learned fencing, tennis, music, and so forth; and, like other future heads of States, he dabbled in verse with some success. To complete an education of the most liberal kind, he made, with his elder brother Cornelius, — for in life, as in death, the pair were united, — the grand tour of the seventeenth century; the brothers travelled through a large part of France, and visited London and the southern counties. It was the time of the troubles of the Fronde, of the close of the civil wars of England, and of the tragical fate of Charles I.; but, curiously enough, the letters of the De Witts take no notice of these great events, though they certainly must have impressed them deeply. Very probably, with characteristic caution, the young men were unwilling, when in foreign lands, to place on record their views respecting affairs of State of the highest moment.

At the age of twenty-four John de Witt became an advocate of the Supreme Court at the Hague. He carried to the bar precocious fame, and some of his youthful pleadings are extremely good; but he was not destined to devote to law abilities fit for a nobler calling. In 1650 the Seven Provinces were shaken by a revolutionary

movement, which, after a series of rapid changes, ended in assuring the ascendancy, for a time, of the high burgher families that ruled Holland. William II., the stadtholder, the hot-brained chief of the illustrious house of Orange-Nassau, had for years aspired to a higher position than that of a mere chief magistrate. Allied by marriage with the king of England, he naturally desired to wear a crown; and with the connivance, perhaps, of Charles I., and certainly of the crafty Mazarin, he had secretly plotted to subvert the republic. A proposition made by the States of Holland to reduce the army under his command, gave the prince the opportunity he sought; at the head of a soldiery devoted to him, he attempted to surprise and take Amsterdam; and he suddenly arrested and cast into prison * six deputies of the obnoxious province. His supremacy seemed, for the moment, complete, for, though loud murmurs of discontent were heard, the different States of the Seven Provinces were not agreed on the vote for the army, and in many respects were ill in accord; but death unexpectedly closed his career, and, for a time, defeated the hopes of his party. A counter-revolution speedily followed; and as the stadtholder's heir was only an infant — William III. was born eight days after his father's death — and the States-General had little real power without the support of the chief magistrate, authority passed to the States of Holland, at all times the first of the United Provinces, and, as we have said, centred in its great burgher houses. The occasion brought John de Witt forth from the obscurity of a learned profession. His father had been one of the imprisoned deputies; he was known to be a young man of parts; and he was chosen, accordingly, by his fellow-townsmen, as pensionary, or head of its governing body, to represent Dort in the States of the province. He took a prominent part in the long debates which followed the recent change of government; sustained with great force a scheme to exclude the young child of the late stadtholder from the

* The attempt of Charles I. to arrest the leaders of the opposition in the House of Commons will recur to the mind of the reader of English history.

hereditary place of chief of the army; and gave proof of such talent and ripe discretion, that he became known in the States as the "wise youth of Holland." His rise, in fact, was so complete and sudden, that in 1652 he was selected to fill the office, temporarily, of grand pensionary, or head of the province; and this, too, at a critical juncture, when the commonwealth was in extreme danger. The choice, nevertheless, was well justified; he showed ability of the highest order in negotiations with foreign powers; and he succeeded by admirable skill and firmness in preventing an Orange rising in Zealand, which threatened to overthrow the existing government. Already recognized as the real leader of the class now dominant in the republic, John de Witt was confirmed, in 1653, in the high place he had held for a time, and he was made grand pensionary for the legal term of five years. He was a little older than Pitt when that great minister came to the helm of affairs in England; and, like Pitt, he was for nearly twenty years supreme.

The office to which John de Witt succeeded made him president of the States of Holland, and administrative head of the whole province, through the governing bodies of the leading towns; and it gave him large influence in the States-General, especially in their external relations. By the law, however, the grand pensionary was in no sense chief of the entire commonwealth; and his prerogatives, in fact, were strictly limited to the narrow bounds of a single province. Partly, however, because, as we have said, after the decline of constitutional powers, authority naturally passed to Holland, which was always the dominant State, but chiefly perhaps, because a great man almost always draws authority to himself, John de Witt became, in a short time, the virtual ruler of the Dutch republic. It was fortunate that he attained this position, for a master hand was needed, at this time, to guide the nation through a sea of troubles. The jealousy of a rival maritime power had brought on a terrible war with England; but, though Tromp had upheld the glory of his flag, the fleets of the States had been defeated in a series of fiercely contested actions, and had taken refuge within their harbors, and the victorious enemy was preying upon the vast commerce of the defenceless commonwealth, and was sapping its resources by a strict blockade, from the mouths of the Scheldt to those of the Ems. Meanwhile a quarrel had broken out with France, curiously

enough concerning the right of search; and other States, which had felt the arms or envied the wealth of the Venice of the north, had tacitly combined in a league against her. The Portuguese had reconquered Brazil and certain Dutch settlements in the Indian seas; the court of Sweden was openly hostile; and even the Empire and its subject princes anticipated gladly the ruin of a power which, in many respects, had presented a contrast humiliating to their own needy arrogance. Revolution, besides, with its train of evils, had, as we have seen, disturbed the nation; it had envenomed faction, destroyed credit, and generally impaired that steadfast patriotism which is the best hope of a people in danger. The disasters that soon overtook a community depending for the most part on commerce were grievous, and threatened to become intolerable. The public distress was so great that "grass," it was said, "grew in the streets of Amsterdam, and hundreds of ships rotted along the wharves;" many of the chief citizens of the large trading towns shut up their houses and shops in despair; a whole population was reduced to want, deprived of its yearly harvests of the sea; even the peasantry suffered and murmured loudly; and it had become impossible to collect the taxes, the State being menaced with general bankruptcy. The nation which, a few years before, had emerged victorious from a death-struggle, which had founded colonies in many lands, had extended its commerce to distant continents, and had made Europe minister to its wealth, seemed about to fall from its high estate.

The grand pensionary contrived to rescue his countrymen from these depths of disaster by a policy necessarily not brilliant, and even, in some degree, tortuous, but well considered and ably conducted. The one great enemy of the States was England, which, under the vigorous rule of Cromwell, was making Europe feel how intense may be the energy of a revolutionary power, and which seemed to have so completely beaten down the republic, that the Protector contemplated its annexation. To make peace with England, on any fair conditions, John de Witt perceived was therefore essential; and he addressed himself to the arduous task with characteristic skill and judgment. The existing English and Dutch governments had one common ground of feeling and interest: Cromwell was naturally jealous of the Prince of Orange, a kinsman of the fallen house of Stuart; the high

burghers of Holland regarded the child as a dangerous pretender to their own power; and both viewed with dislike the royalist exiles, who, with Charles II. had fled from England and taken refuge in the territory of the Seven Provinces. Making dexterous use of these sentiments, the grand pensionary, after a long game of diplomatic address and intrigue, succeeded in obtaining the coveted peace, and that on better terms than might have been thought possible. England, indeed, obtained a complete recognition of her ancient claim to the sovereignty of the seas, and compensation for bygone injuries; but the States suffered little material loss, and the idea of annexation was forever abandoned. It was stipulated, too, between the contracting powers, that an asylum should be refused in the States to the royal family of England and their adherents; and the Prince of Orange was declared excluded from the high commands that had belonged to his house. A singular incident proves how complete was the ascendancy of Holland at this time. John de Witt, foreseeing that the States-General, and indeed the States of the other provinces, would never consent to the clause of exclusion, proposed that it should be submitted to, and ratified by, the States of Holland only; and Cromwell accepted this strange compromise, though it had no sanction from usage or law, and though it was opposed by many even of the Holland deputies. The treaty, however, if irregularly made, had brought the war with England to a close; and, as John de Witt had correctly judged, the republic could deal with her remaining enemies. The dispute with France was quickly patched up, though it left bitter recollections behind; for France, at this period, had no navy that could pretend to cope with the Dutch squadrons. As for the Portuguese, they retained Brazil, but they were driven from the Indian islands and seas, and their government was soon brought to reason, a fleet under De Ruyter having blockaded Lisbon. A great naval victory won in the Baltic disposed equally of the threats of Sweden, and the Empire and its vassals were obliged to acquiesce in the revival of the successful republic. Within eighteen months from the Treaty of Westminster, the commonwealth was at peace with all foreign powers, and was able, so to speak, to breathe freely again.

During the years that followed, the States regained, and even increased, their former prosperity; and they attained the highest point of their power. The navy

of the commonwealth, which had always been the favorite service of the high burgher class, became more formidable than at any previous time; the ships of its merchants filled every port, and carried the products of more than half of Europe; and the world — forgetting how frail and precarious was all that sustained this brilliant opulence — admired the restoration of the Dutch republic. The government, meanwhile, appeared secure; taxation was lessened by the reduction of the debt; the great office committed to John de Witt was entrusted to him for the second time, and the Orange party was for a while silent amidst general plenty and content. A new era, however, soon opened in Europe; the Commonwealth of England passed away with Cromwell; Charles II. sat on his father's throne, and France, rich in all kinds of resources, and ruled by a young and ambitious king, had become the dominant power of the Continent. The Dutch republic felt ere long the consequences of these momentous changes. Charles II. had made smooth professions to the States, and had sailed from the Hague on his way to England; but he had not forgotten the Treaty of Westminster, and he longed to chastise the insolent burghers who had dared to offer an affront to royalty. Besides, an increasing rivalry kept up the old feud between the States and England; the traders and seamen of the two nations had quarrels in every part of the globe; the Cavalier Parliament joined in the outcry, and the king encouraged a national sentiment that fell in with his own purpose. Filibustering expeditions against the settlements of the States in Africa and the West Indies provoked a rupture already imminent; the republic instantly declared war, and the two nations rushed to arms once more. We shall not attempt even to sketch the scenes of the short but tremendous struggle that followed, and which is described at length, but not well, in this book. England was never engaged in such another strife at sea as the terrible Battle of Four Days, and England has seen few such days of shame as that on which the Dutch ships forced their way past Chatham, and made their guns to be heard at Gravesend. Of the fleets of the contending powers, the English, on which the Duke of York had certainly bestowed extreme care, apparently made the braver show; it went into action in a more orderly line; its manoeuvres were more exact and brilliant. But the artillery of the Dutch was the more

formidable; they possessed in De Ruyter a great commander, of immense weight in the scale of fortune; and De Ruyter, it would appear, succeeded more than once in breaking the enemy's line, a sure sign of a superiority in skill. As for the common seamen in either fleet, they were foemen worthy of each other's steel; well matched in dexterity, strength, and determined courage.

John de Witt played a great part in this war. With a tendency to temporize, which was perhaps his most distinctive fault as a statesman, he had endeavored too long to avert the storm by mere diplomacy and expedients of the kind; and, with a statecraft not deserving praise, he had given up three of the regicide judges to appease the ill-will of Charles II. The war, however, found the States prepared; and the grand pensionary, as head of the government, not only planned some of the chief operations, but took a large share in its stirring events. After the defeat of Obdam off the coasts of Suffolk, he went on board the fleet to direct a commission charged to enquire into the admiral's conduct; and he did not leave the flagship until the armament, refitted under his careful eye, was ready to put again to sea. It was he, too, who ordered the descent on Chatham, superintended by his brother Cornelius; and, had the war continued, he had projected attacks on the ill-defended coasts of Scotland and Ireland, which would probably have had great results. His scientific and mechanical knowledge, too, proved valuable in the highest degree; the accuracy of his calculations on winds and tides was repeatedly of great service; he perfected several naval instruments, and chain-shot, a terrible missile now disused, was one of his ingenious inventions. The young French nobles of the embassy at the Hague have described with sneers how the great "burgher thought himself the equal of a Venetian noble, and, dressed in uniform, and with a long dangling sword, stalked about the fleet with an air of importance;" but the close friendship between John de Witt and De Ruyter, which dated from this very occasion, proves what the foremost seaman of the age thought of the assistance of the civilian statesman. The arduous exertions of the grand pensionary were rewarded by no uncertain success; and though the effects of the Great Fire and the Plague contributed to the final result, it was the disaster in the Medway that made England treat. The Peace of Breda in 1667 was not, as has

been said, disgraceful; but it was different from that dictated by Cromwell. Each power practically retained its conquests; but the States kept possession of one of the Sunda Islands, which they had undertaken to cede to England; the Navigation Act was, in part, relaxed; a favorable treaty of commerce was made, and England in some degree modified her imperious claim to the dominion of the seas.

Long before the Peace of Breda, however, the republic had begun to feel the pressure of the other great monarchy that approached its borders. Philip IV. of Spain had died in 1665; and Louis XIV. set about accomplishing the traditional policy of the house of Bourbon for the increase of the power and dominions of France. He laid claim, in right of his wife, Maria Theresa, an infanta of Spain, to the greater part of the Spanish Netherlands and to large possessions in Franche Comté, and, with the calculating craft which often marked his conduct, he took ample means to enforce his pretensions. Everything seemed to favor the ambitious monarch: his army, led by the first generals of the age, and organized to a high degree of perfection, was beyond comparison the best in Europe; his diplomatists were men of parts and experience, and his finances seemed equal to any effort. By his alliances, too, he had, he thought, secured the consent of Christendom to his schemes of conquest. He was giving apparent aid at this time to the States; but it is now known that he was offering Charles II. a share of the spoil of the Spanish monarchy, if England would be friendly or neutral, and Charles lent a willing ear to his overtures, though no positive engagement was made. As for the rest of Europe, Louis had obtained the acquiescence of the emperor Leopold by a policy of promises, threats, and bribes, carried out with remarkable boldness and skill; and he had bought over, cajoled, or terrified, a majority of the princes along the Rhine, who were almost vassals of France since the Peace of Westphalia. The northern courts, moreover, had been won by similar means, and also because Louis had soothed their fears by renouncing a project to place a French prince on the throne of Poland; and even Frederick William, the great elector, already jealous of French ambition, and meditating a league of German States against it, had been brought into an alliance with the king. In 1666, when England and the States were destroying each other in

a deadly conflict, it seemed all but certain that the coveted provinces would soon drop into the lap of France.

One statesman only in Europe had tried to check these projects of French aggression, and had already foreseen their natural results. Even before the death of Philip IV., John de Witt had exchanged ideas with De Lionne with reference to the Spanish Netherlands; and it would have been well for the world and France had Louis given heed to his enlightened counsels. The object of the Dutch statesman was to keep France at a distance from the United Provinces; he perfectly understood the kind of neighbor she would prove to be if seated on the Scheldt; and he proposed that, in the event of Spain being obliged to cede her Netherland provinces, these — according to a project of Richelieu — should be constituted an independent State, under the protection of the great powers of Europe, — anticipating, in fact, the modern settlement of Belgium; or, as an alternative, that France and the States should agree to divide these debatable lands, a fortified barrier being raised between them. The arguments he addressed to the king and his ministers in favor of this far-sighted scheme — which, it will be remarked, forestalled the policy with regard to France and the Low Countries, since carried out in different ways from the Peace of Utrecht to 1830 — are remarkable for their provident wisdom. The grand pensionary, endeavoring to further the interests of the States, but reasoning to influence French statesmen, distinctly pointed out that England would never permit France to become mistress of the Spanish Netherlands; that a terrible conflict would be the consequence; and that, in any case, it was the true policy of France to keep the maritime power of England in check by a cordial alliance with the Dutch republic, this depending upon the frank adoption of the plan of which we have traced the outline. The subsequent course of European history attests the sagacity of these views; and how different would have been the march of events had they been accepted by Louis XIV.! But when did arrogance and conscious power listen to the voice of justice and reason? Colbert, it is said, backed John de Witt's proposals; but the king paid little attention to them; and, when everything was ready, the invasion began. In the spring of 1667 three French armies marched from Picardy and Lorraine into the Spanish Netherlands, under the command of

Louis himself and Turenne; and the campaign, it was said, was a "summer journey." In an incredibly short time the Spanish fortresses on the Lys, the Dender, the Scheldt, and the Sambre, ill-provided, surprised, and weakly defended, opened their gates to the exulting conquerors; Lille alone stood a regular siege; and as autumn approached, the French watch-fires might have been descried from the walls of Brussels.

The grand pensionary, as may be supposed, beheld with alarm the extreme rapidity and suddenness of this easy conquest; and the policy he had advocated was no longer feasible. Skilled, however, beyond most men in expedients, and, as usual, manœuvring to gain time, he submitted to Louis a new project, and proposed that, in the existing state of affairs, Spain should acquiesce in accomplished facts, and that France should retain a part of the Netherlands; and the republic, he added, would support the king, should Spain not accept the proffered conditions. But on the death of the young king of Spain — a decrepit child not expected to live — his old plan was to be entertained again; and the residue of the Netherlands was to be made a neutral state — like the Belgium, as we have said, of the present day — and to be partitioned, leaving a fortified barrier. To the surprise of Saint-Germain, and of John de Witt himself, Louis, towards the close of 1667, accepted in principle the proposed terms; nay, he claimed a smaller part of his late conquests than he had demanded two months previously. The grand pensionary nevertheless paused; maintained a dubious attitude for a time; and then, with a quickness scarcely his wont, adopted a policy almost wholly new. The attack on the Low Countries, and the dangerous progress made in a few weeks by the arms of France, had aroused general alarm in Europe; and in England, especially, the old jealousy of France had been made intense by these events — the feeling, in truth, had been growing for years — and had provoked an outburst of national wrath. At this juncture, too, the men who had inclined to a French alliance in the closet of Charles, and had usually supported a French policy, had been driven from office, or had lost power; and a set of ministers were in their places, who were generally believed to regard France with distrust, and who, it might be supposed, from their professed sympathies, would uphold a Protestant power like the States. The new administration,

may the king himself, yielding to the force of popular sentiment, made overtures to the Dutch republic; and the grand pensionary saw in these proposals the means of assuring at least the success of his projects as to the Spanish Netherlands, and of providing that Louis should keep his word. The result is well known to students of history: John de Witt and Temple met at the Hague; and the Triple Alliance was the fruit of the negotiations of a few momentous days. By this compact, England, the Dutch, and Sweden — that State, too, had become jealous of Louis — agreed that Spain ought to be made to cede — if necessary by force — the strip of the Netherlands claimed recently by the king of France; but provision was made by a secret article, that, should Louis depart from his own terms, the three powers would declare war against him, and would enter into a closer alliance. Of the future of the Low Countries little was said, and, to ensure secrecy and expedition, the instrument was approved by a small committee only, chosen from the body of the States-General, and was not submitted, according to the law, to the States of any of the Seven Provinces, an expedient which shows how great was the power of John de Witt and his confidence in himself.

There is always danger when a State changes its old alliances for a new system; and in this instance the change was certainly fraught with ill to the Dutch republic. Very possibly, too, the grand pensionary would not have taken a course opposed to his usual policy of leaning on France, had he thoroughly understood our insular politics, and read the hearts of Charles and the Cabal. Yet we now know that he was completely justified in distrusting the proposals of Louis; and he was in the right in endeavoring to find security against the aggressiveness of the king. The offers of Louis were not sincere; at this very time he had made a secret treaty with the emperor for the final partition, in certain events, of the whole Spanish monarchy, inconsistent with his pledges to John de Witt; and it was perhaps the knowledge of this audacious compact that caused the Dutch statesman to treat with Temple. As for the Triple Alliance, it soon came to nothing. It lasted, in fact, a few months only, and it had but little effect on the subsequent Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1668, by which Spain lost a great part of the Netherlands. It may appear strange, therefore, that this celebrated league was

regarded by a generation of Englishmen as a political event of supreme importance, and that it really forms a landmark in the history of the time; and yet it is not difficult to understand the reason. Up to this period the power of France had been growing for fully half a century, until it had become dangerous to every nation. In fact it overshadowed Europe; and yet it had seemed impossible to check its progress, and no coalition had made the attempt. But the Triple Alliance opposed resistance, for the first time, to this evil ascendancy; and, what is more significant, it proved the forerunner of the alliances which, during the next forty years, curbed the ambition and pride of Louis XIV., and finally triumphed at the Peace of Utrecht. For our fathers, therefore, it was the first turn in a tide of events long viewed with alarm, the first ray that shows a break in the storm; and it became the harbinger of an age of glory, succeeding years of national decline and weakness. Many of the generation that had heard of Seneffe, and were eye-witnesses of the disaster at Chatham, lived to exult over the great deeds of Marlborough, and to see England the first power in Europe. The Triple Alliance, in the eyes of these men, was as certainly connected with the later events, as the rising of Spain in 1807-8 was associated in our fathers' thoughts with the triumphs of Wellington and the Allies and the fall of Napoleon.

The republic was, for a brief season, at rest after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. John de Witt, re-elected in 1663, had become grand pensionary by a fourth election; and the States basked in the sun of good fortune which had usually shone during his long supremacy. But a dark hour of disaster was near; and though, after a fearful trial, the commonwealth escaped from the danger, its illustrious head was to perish in the shock. Louis XIV. never forgave the insult, as he thought it, of the Triple Alliance. That a junto of traders should thwart the policy and distrust the word of the royalty of France, was a plebeian outrage not to be borne; and fuel was added to the wrath of the king by caricatures from the free press of the States, and by a tariff hostile to Colbert's views. To humble, perhaps to destroy the republic, became with Louis a settled resolve; and to effect his object he toiled for two years with an assiduous energy, which attests alike the vindictiveness of his despotic nature, and his high estimate of the power of the States. His army, fresh from a recent

campaign in Franche Comté, as brilliant as that of 1667 in the Low Countries, was raised to full two hundred thousand men; and extraordinary exertions were made to fit out a fleet capable, to some extent, of contending with the renowned Dutch navy. As was his wont, too, Louis spared no effort to form alliances against the intended enemy; and, like Napoleon in the great war of 1812, the king united more than half Europe in a league to crush the imperilled commonwealth. He turned to England in the first instance, and the secret negotiations and Treaty of Dover secured the compliance of the Cabal with his views, by pandering to the wants and passions of Charles, by encouraging royal intrigues in Parliament, and even by solid provision for English interests in a proposed partition of the territories of the States, and a guarantee in favor of the Spanish Netherlands, or rather of what remained of them. The other allies of the king were gained by expedients, for the most part, similar to those which had proved successful in 1666-7. The secret treaty for the partitioning of Spain was dangled before the eyes of the emperor; and he was told, on the one hand, that the ruin of the States would facilitate this iniquitous scheme, and, on the other, that, if he opposed the king, all Hungary would be stirred up against him. Extraordinary precautions were taken to assure the co-operation of the Rhenish princes, especially of the great bishops of Münster and Cologne, for the territories along the lower Rhine were to be the theatre of the projected attack; and the elector of Bavaria, and other States, were induced or compelled to join the alliance. The northern courts were won over also; and, in fact, all Europe north of the Danube, if we except the grand elector and a few petty princes, were combined in a league to assail the States when the king of France should give the first signal.

The preparations for the great enterprise went on during 1670 and 1671, and John de Witt labored to avert the danger already gathering around his country. As usual, however, he regarded politics as an affair of reason undisturbed by passion; he hesitated, perhaps, too long to act; and in one instance, certainly of supreme importance, the hopes he entertained were completely frustrated. He made great efforts to turn away Louis from his evident purpose by tempting offers; he kept Spain outside the Triple Alliance, and opened again the question of the Spanish succession; and he once

more proposed that France and the States should reduce the naval pretensions of England, which had already given the king umbrage. Louis, however, put these projects aside, or trifled with them merely to gain time; and the Dutch statesman, it must be admitted, from his lifelong sympathies or from ignorance of courts, was not suspicious enough of this dubious attitude. As for the rest of the Continent, John de Witt appears to have thought that the Empire and its dependents could not be induced to form a league so obviously fatal to their own interests, as would lead to an attack on the States; and if this conclusion was at the moment wrong, it rested on grounds of solid sense, as subsequent history amply proved. For the time, however, the States were forestalled, and had secret foes where they ought to have found allies; and, as regards England, the grand pensionary unquestionably was altogether deceived, with consequences even more disastrous. The diplomatists of the States at Whitehall failed to get wind of the Treaty of Dover; John de Witt was left in complete ignorance of the late revolution in English policy; and, as Parliament and the nation still clearly pronounced for the Triple Alliance and all that was implied in it, he believed that he could rely on England, in the last resort, against French aggression. As a general consequence, the States remained almost isolated in a hostile Europe, and French statecraft had opened a way apparently safe for French conquest. Yet John de Witt was not wholly discomfited in this long game of intrigue; Spain and Frederick William promised assistance; and these alliances ultimately proved of incalculable value in the hour of need.

To the disasters that threatened the States from abroad, was to be added, besides, a peril at home, which had grown for years, and become most formidable. The Orange party had at no period accepted cordially a high-burgher government, and on several occasions it had angrily stirred and created serious and widespread trouble. On the whole, however, it had acquiesced, in prosperous times, in the rule of John de Witt; and during the boyhood of the young prince it was a defeated faction without a head. The grand pensionary too, with characteristic skill, had successfully labored to divide and lessen the dreaded influence of William III.: he had dexterously played on family jealousies to separate and weaken his closest adherents; and he

had contrived to enact a law by which future stadtholders were pronounced, in certain events, ineligible to hold military and civil posts at the same time. Nevertheless, with his habitual love of compromise, he had indirectly opposed the States of Holland in a proposition to abolish the office of stadtholder, and to transfer its functions; and he actually undertook in person to superintend the studies and education of the prince, sincerely believing that he was a friend of the lad, and that he could mould William III. to high-burgher sympathies. Calm and self-contained, like his great ancestor, but apt to dissimulate, even in his teens, the young man silently accepted his lot, and treated his preceptor with studied deference; but he suddenly quitted John de Witt's roof, on the first occasion when a chance offered, and he contrived to make his escape into Zealand, always the stronghold of the Orange party. He was received in the province with general acclaim, was declared by the States their "first noble," the local rank enjoyed by his house; and he was soon at the head of a great following, enthusiastically attached to his name and cause. The contagion spread through the other provinces, and William found himself, at the age of twenty, the leader of a formidable party in the States, strong in the support of the Calvinist clergy (always on the side of the house of Orange), of the mass of the people, who bore with ill-will the domination of the high-burgher caste, and of the classes and persons who are at all times dissatisfied with an existing government. At this moment, in fact, when invasion was near, revolution threatened the republic at home; and John de Witt, who had unwillingly raised the Prince of Orange to high place in the State, was compelled at the close of 1671, by general pressure impossible to resist, to give him the chief command in the army, and to entrust the defence of the commonwealth to an untried general of twenty-two. This was a heavy blow to the grand pensionary's power; and other causes conspired to shake the authority already slipping from him, and to weaken and undermine his government. All who had felt jealous of his supremacy, and the false friends who had fawned on his greatness, fell away from him in the hour of danger; and it had become impossible to act with the vigor and energy required at a tremendous crisis in a State torn by domestic faction.

John de Witt, however, was not found wanting, or unworthy of himself, at this

great emergency; and the author of this book deserves the credit of having relieved this part of the statesman's career from the obloquy which has been thrown upon it. When it had become evident that war was certain, that is in the first months of 1672, the grand pensionary addressed himself to preparations for the national defence, with the intelligence and firmness of a real man of action. The navy, under the command of De Ruyter, was already in a high state of perfection; it numbered a hundred and thirty men-of-war and frigates—a proof how immense was the power of the States at sea. John de Witt, still ignorant of the Treaty of Dover, proposed to employ a part of this armament in shutting up the French fleets in their harbors, and in making descents on the coasts of France; and great exertions were made to accomplish a plan cordially approved by De Ruyter. By land, too, with a true instinct, the grand pensionary desired to forestall the enemy's attack, and to take the offensive, or, at least, to keep the French at a distance; and he wished to fall suddenly on the exposed territories of the allies of Louis along the Rhine, and to occupy in force the strong places upon the lower course of the river, throwing garrisons, besides, into the fortresses of the Meuse. Unfortunately the military power of the States was not equal to efforts like these; and time was wanting to increase it largely, especially in the distracted state of the commonwealth. The army of the republic had always been an appanage of the house of Orange; it had not been favored by the high-burgher class; and during the long years of repose on the frontier, which had followed the end of the war with Spain, it had gradually been greatly reduced in numbers, and had fallen into a state of decline and indiscipline. Corruption, weakness, and insubordination of all kinds, in fact, prevailed at this time in the force which had once contended with Parma's legions, and had repeatedly baffled the art of Spinola; and, with a strength on paper of one hundred thousand men, it numbered less than thirty thousand soldiers. In this state of things, and also because the fortresses, which in past wars had proved such formidable points of defence, were many of them ill-prepared and ill-armed, John de Witt was compelled to abandon his project; and the army of the States, under the Prince of Orange, was concentrated behind the line of the Yssel, with garrisons only in the fortified towns along the banks of the

Meuse and the Rhine. Extraordinary exertions, however, were made to raise new levies, and to improve the fortresses; and if the grand pensionary cannot escape blame for having, during his protracted rule, neglected the military force of the States, and for being too late at this conjuncture, he made good use of the resources at hand to place the commonwealth in a state of defence.

In May, 1672, the long-threatened tempest suddenly burst. Three armies, organized with extreme care, and furnished with every appliance required to master rivers and overcome fortresses, were directed against the territories of the States: the first, under the command of Luxembourg, advancing to meet the allied contingents of the two bishops on the lower Rhine; the second, with the great Condé at its head, moving on a parallel line by the Meuse; the third, led by Turenne and Louis, by the Sambre across the Spanish Netherlands, the neutrality of which had been violated with contempt, as in the case, long afterwards, of the campaign of Ulm. The second and third armies effected their junction not far from Maestricht, on the lower Meuse. That celebrated fortress did not arrest the movement, having been masked by a sufficient detachment; and Louis, following the counsel of Turenne, a master of the great operations of war, made, with his united forces, for the lower Rhine. The celerity of the invaders' march was unexampled in the seventeenth century; fortress after fortress, assailed with the art and resources perfected by the renowned Vauban, and feebly defended, opened their gates; and by the second week of June, the victorious French had turned the great defensive line of the Wahal, and had penetrated into the province of Gelderland. The barrier of the Leck was next broken through, an advanced guard of horse having forced the passage, under the eyes of the king, with audacious courage; and by the 14th of June the conquering army, from sixty to eighty thousand strong, was rapidly marching towards the Yssel. The Prince of Orange had not more than thirty thousand men to defend the river; his army, besides, was too extended; and he was compelled to retreat from the last line of vantage, and to fall back to the verge of Holland. Meanwhile Luxembourg and his auxiliary forces were overrunning the northern provinces; towards the middle of June they had reached the Yssel and drawn near to the main army; and, in a few days, the fortified towns on

the river, following the example of their sisters on the Rhine, had succumbed to the invader's efforts. Louis, before this, had approached Utrecht and taken possession of the surrounding country; and, by the 18th of June, the citizens of Amsterdam heard with terror that a vast hostile force was encamped within a few leagues of their walls. Had the king listened to the advice of Condé*—the most daring and brilliant general of the age—a few thousand horsemen might at this crisis have fallen upon and captured the city; and, in that event, it is difficult to see how the commonwealth could have escaped destruction.

Hostilities had begun a month only; the invaders had marched from conquest to conquest; and now Zealand and Holland were the only provinces of the republic outside their iron grasp. Even at sea the projects of the grand pensionary had been to a great extent frustrated; Charles, throwing off the mask, had declared war, and endeavored to suppress the voice of his people; and the junction of the English and French squadrons had made the intended descents impossible. De Ruyter, indeed, had vindicated his high renown; he had surprised the allied fleets in the roads of Solebay, and had gained a bloody but indecisive victory; but the navy of the States, after the disasters on land, was compelled gradually to abandon the sea, and was drawn towards the coast for the national defence. The situation seemed all but hopeless; and, in the universal panic caused by the rapidity and completeness of the French invasion, John de Witt assembled the States-General, and, with their approval, sent a deputation to Louis. It may well be that the proposal to treat, at this terrible crisis, was an unwise policy; the grand pensionary ought probably to have seen that concession and compromise were now useless, and that resistance to the death was the one chance for his country; but the step he took, it is just to recollect, was sanctioned by the great national council, by a large majority of his own order, and even by many of the people of Holland; and finally it was in no sense opposed by the Prince of Orange and the military chiefs, who thought it impossible to prolong the war. On the other hand, the author of this work, with an industry and research deserving all praise, has shown that the heroic resolve which first arrested the in-

* The Duc d'Aumale, in the forthcoming volumes of his "Lives of the Condés," will, no doubt, explain this important passage of the campaign.

vader's progress, and proved the salvation of the republic, was due in the main to the high-minded statesman, who is described by more than one historian of the time as, at this conjuncture, a pusillanimous coward. Before the French army had drawn near Utrecht, John de Witt had secretly given directions to have everything ready to pierce the dykes; and at the very time when he was parleying with the foe, he was inviting the chief men of the towns of Holland to venture upon a tremendous experiment, to be justified only by the extremity of danger. The assembly was by no means unanimous; many angry or timid protests were raised, but the grand pensionary was firm in his purpose; and the magistrates of Amsterdam having declared on his side, the orders were issued in the third week of June. In a few days the devouring sea, regaining with joy its ancient domain, had blotted out a rich and prosperous landscape formed by the toil of industrious ages; and villages, houses, pastures, and gardens, had disappeared under its silent wastes. But a broad and impassable expanse of waters lay between Amsterdam and the French army; and men-of-war, floating like fortresses on the waves, formed a line of defence round the still imperilled city.

By this time the republican envoys — of whom De Groot, a son of the famous Grotius, and formerly ambassador from the States to France, was the most eminent — had made their way to the camp of Louis. The king scornfully refused to see them, and handed them over to the pitiless Louvois, who, on the pretence that they had not sufficient powers, sent them back to the States without a word of hope. De Groot and his colleagues were at the Hague on the 25th and 26th of June; but they found the government almost in anarchy, and a revolution already imminent. The disasters of the commonwealth had brought disgrace on the long dominant high-burgher caste, and had enormously strengthened the Orange party; an insurrectionary movement had begun; and the grand pensionary, a mark for conspiracy, had been severely wounded by the hands of assassins. Long and angry debates, not restrained by the wisdom and moderating influence of John de Witt, followed in the States of Holland and the States-General on the question of treating further with Louis; the deputies of Amsterdam and of five other towns insisted on breaking off, and refused to vote; the representatives in the States-General of five of the

provinces were absent, or uttered doubtful protests; but ultimately a majority in the States of Holland gave De Groot full powers in the name of the commonwealth, the secretary of the States-General withholding his signature to an instrument which expressed their consent. The vote, due in the main to the influence of a discredited class in a single province, became the signal for a great Orange rising, and for a tremendous outburst of popular passion. A cry went forth from Zealand and Holland, and found an echo in the other provinces, that the base merchants who had mismanaged everything, and had brought the nation to the verge of ruin, were about to save their wealth and their skins, by making an ignominious peace with the enemy; and a furious demand for a change in the government was adroitly encouraged by the adherents of William, and was backed by a mass of angry discontent, and by the army almost to a man; while it was even approved by reflecting persons, who sincerely thought that, at this crisis, the best chance for the commonwealth lay in a transfer of power to the Prince of Orange. Words rapidly passed into significant acts; a general insurrection broke out; in several towns the existing head men were violently replaced by Orange partisans; in others the magistrates were forced to swear allegiance to the young chief of the army, who was already hailed as the new chief of the State; in many, the government was denounced by excited and shouting mobs as knaves and cowards; and in some the burgher class had to hide their heads, or fly for their lives from the wrath of the populace. The movement was wild, but, on the whole, national; and rude banners worked with the quaint inscription of "Orange open, Witt (White) onder," as they were flung out from many a tower and steeple, or were borne on high in a hundred market-places, attested the force of the prevailing sentiment. Nor was the success of the rising doubtful; the States of Holland — the centre and seat of the authority of the late ruling order — were compelled in terror, and under the threats of the populace, to give the revolution a solemn sanction, and to place William at the head of the commonwealth. On the 1st of July the prince was invested with the full authority of the ancient stadtholders by the assembly which, a few years before, had tried hard to abolish the office.

The change in the government was sudden and complete. John de Witt ere

long retired from the post he had filled with honor for nearly twenty years, and the administration of the two unconquered provinces was transferred to adherents of the Prince of Orange. Revolution, however, thirsts for blood, and the abettors of faction and popular fury united in a fierce cry for vengeance on the alleged traitors and foes of the States. The late grand pensionary was naturally the chief object of this passionate hate; but the first blow fell on the faithful brother, who had been for years his best friend and adviser. Cornelius de Witt, as high commissioner of the States, had been at sea during the late contest, and his presence of mind, of which he had given proof on De Ruyter's deck during the fight of Solebay, had won the admiration of the great seamen and his crew. But party madness thrust aside such memories: he had resented the violent change of magistrates at Dort, where the revolution first broke out, and this was enough in itself to mark him for a victim. An informer, infamous in life and character, made a false and scandalous charge against him, of having conspired against the Prince of Orange; and, having been arrested, and, contrary to law, taken out of the jurisdiction of Dort, he was cast into the state prison of the Hague. The judges of the supreme court of Holland, either being partisans of the new government or influenced by the frenzy of the hour, felt no scruples about trying to extort a confession from him by the direst tortures, and when the barbarous attempt had failed, and no proof of guilt could be found, they sentenced him to banishment for life. This example, however, went for nothing, while the other brother, a greater criminal in the eyes of the multitude, remained unpunished. John de Witt had been the head of the high-burgher class; he had always favored the national enemy; he had done nothing for the defence of the provinces; he had neglected, wasted, and misdirected everything; and mingled with these terrible charges, in which falsehood was artfully combined with truth, calumny noised about that he had betrayed the republic, that his private life had been steeped in vice, and that he was a bad citizen and a designing traitor. Denunciations like these breed crime, as a matter of course, at a popular crisis, and a conspiracy was hatched to murder the statesman who a few months before had been the pride of his countrymen. The wretches who had informed against one brother, and, terrible to relate, one of that brother's judges,

were deep in the plot against the late grand pensionary; and it was finally agreed that a visit, to be made by John de Witt to Cornelius in prison, should be the occasion for the slaughter of both. The deed was to be done by a mob directed against the prison when the brothers were inside; but the conspiracy had skilful and determined leaders, and the sympathy at least of the multitude; and it is not improbable that John de Witt was lured to the terrible fate prepared for him by an invitation forged in his brother's name.*

The tragedy that followed was not only a national crime of the deepest dye, with horrible and revolting incidents, but it illustrates one of the lessons of history, that in a revolution authority will often fail, be untrue to itself, and become powerless in presence of reckless and audacious wickedness. The charge of the state prison and the adjoining precincts was, it seems, divided between a committee of the States of Holland, at this time in session, and the magistrates of the town council of the Hague; and, as intelligence of a plot had perhaps been obtained, a body of soldiers from the regular army and parties from the train-bands of the guilds had been stationed around the building, with orders to keep the peace and to drive off a crowd. As soon, however, as an excited multitude, stirred to fury by the authors of the plot, had surged into the square around the prison, the members of the committee of the States slunk away, or only protested feebly; the magistrates, retreating to the town hall, entered into a parley with the very men who had been told off to commit the crime, and the soldiers were marched away on a false pretext, the commander, alone true to his duty, exclaiming against the desertion of their post. Thus the work to be done became easy; the train-band parties made no resistance; and one of these bodies actually furnished hands to consummate the execrable deed. We transcribe from the volumes before us details of the crime and the scenes that followed; the narrative is copious and less dull than usual. The assassins found the doomed men together:—

The brothers heard them approach without alarm. Cornelius de Witt, broken down by the agonies of torture, was stretched upon his bed; he wore a nightcap, and was dressed in a robe of foreign stuff. John de Witt, who had kept on his shoulders his velvet cloak, was

* M. Pontalis denies this; but see Henri Martin and his authorities on the other side. (*Histoire de France*, vol. xiii., p. 404.)

seated before a table at the foot of the bed. He was reading the Bible to his brother, to strengthen him against the fear of death, and the anguish of the last hour of life. The officers of the guilds, who were their guardians, tried in vain to defend them against the murderers; these drove them back, charged them with having been bribed, and threatened them with the fate of the prisoners.

A kind of prelude to the crime followed:—

Impatient to hasten to the bloody end, Verhoef, followed by his band, rushes to the bed of Cornelius de Witt, rudely draws the curtains, and exclaims, "Traitor, you must die; pray to God, and get ready." "What harm have I done you?" was the calm answer of the victim. "You intended to take away the Prince's life; make haste, get up at once," said Verhoef. Proud and resigned, as he had been in the presence of the torturer, and with his hands joined, the magistrate collects himself in a last prayer, while a blow with the butt-end of a musket, directed against him, and turned aside by Verhoef, strikes one of the posts of the bed and breaks it. He is commanded to dress, and as he is putting a stocking on, a dagger is brandished at him, and he is forced to get up. John de Witt, separated from his brother by the irruption of the assassins, and having tried in vain to lay hold of a sword to defend himself and die, boldly advances to meet them, and asks them if they propose to slay him likewise. "Yes," is the cry; "traitor, scoundrel, thief, the fate of your brother will be yours." At this moment, Van Soenen, a notary, strikes him on the back of his head with a pike, and blood gushes out. The Grand Pensionary calmly takes off his hat, and binds the wound with his pocket-handkerchief. Crossing his arms, he exclaims, in a firm tone of voice, "Do you wish my life? throw me, then, on the ground at your feet." And he bared his breast.

The victims were then dragged forth from the prison, and massacred in sight of the populace:—

By Verhoef's orders, John and Cornelius de Witt, forced from their room, are violently driven towards the circular staircase, with its twenty-nine steps. The Grand Pensionary is dragged down first; his brother, wounded by a blow from a board, is nearly thrown over and hurled to the lowest banister. Scarcely able to move, he stretches out his arms. Their hands join in a parting clasp; and, looking at each other for the last time, each says, "Brother, good-bye!"

When they reached the bottom of the staircase, they could not speak, and lost sight of each other. Verhoef had made John de Witt go on first; he kept close to him, like an executioner. "Troubled by the power of his eye," as he himself declared, he would not have dared to strike the first blow, even with the

aid of two comrades, had John de Witt possessed a weapon to defend himself. He admitted that he was confounded by the coolness of the Grand Pensionary, who, having now only his honor to save, justified himself from the crime of treason laid to his charge, and exclaimed, "If all had done as I, not a town would have been surrendered." Hearing this conversation, and fearing that the prey would escape, the murderers began to accuse Verhoef of having been bribed, and of accepting from John de Witt his purse and watch. To clear himself, he pushed his victim away, and handed him over to the band of savages, who were waiting for him at the entrance of the prison, in order to conduct him, with his brother, sixty paces further to the scaffold in front of his house in the Kneuterdijk. Their fury prevented them from carrying out their orders, and the two prisoners were immolated before they reached the customary place of execution.

Cornelius de Witt, having been dragged rather than led in the footsteps of his brother, — he had been behind him, — was the first to perish by the hands of the murderers. "What do you wish me to do?" he said; "whither am I to go?" Scarcely has he passed from the prison vault, driven along at the point of daggers and pikes, and entered the adjoining square, when, forced against the balustrade that overlooks the canal, he stumbles, falls to the ground, and is trodden under foot. Two citizens, a wineseller called Van Kyp and one Louw, a butcher, strike him down with the butts of their guns. He was trying to raise himself on his hands, when Cornelis d'Assigny, an engraver, the lieutenant of the Blue train-band, stabs him with a dagger, while a sailor splits his skull with a hatchet. The bystanders then rush forward and dance on the corpse.

The agony of his brother follows close upon his own. John de Witt, having been led from the prison bareheaded, and with blood flowing down his face from the stroke of the pike, had wrapped himself up in a cloak, and was making use of it to ward off the blows that were aimed at him from every side. He had been delivered from Verhoef, who, wounded by a blow from a musket, had thought it unsafe to stay by his side, and was trying to escape; and he was addressing the spectators in last words like these, "What are you doing? surely you do not wish this?" when the pitiless men of the Blue train-band drive him back, and close their ranks, while he makes a vain attempt to get through their double line. He was turning his head, horror-stricken, as the frightful sounds that announced the death of his brother reached his ears, when he is shot from behind by a pistol fired by John Van Valme, a navy officer, whose brother had been one of Verhoef's band. Seeing him totter and fall, the assassin exclaims, "There is the Perpetual Edict on the ground!"

John de Witt, bruised and dying, is nevertheless still able to lift his head, and to stretch his clasped hands towards heaven, when this

last insult is not spared: "You pray to God? why you don't believe in Him; you have long ago abjured Him, you traitor and miscreant!" At this moment, another assassin, Peter Verhaguen, an innkeeper, leaves the ranks of the Blue train-band; his gun having missed fire, he gives the Grand Pensionary a violent blow on the head with a musket, which leaves him senseless; and then some other men of the same company—a butcher, Christopher Haan, was one of them—fire at him point-blank, and thus despatch him. It was half past four in the afternoon.

The atrocities that followed bear a strong resemblance to the revolting scenes of the Reign of Terror:—

Two corpses were all that remained of the great citizens who, after faithful and glorious services, had been immolated as their country's enemies. These, too, were not spared. Having brought them to one spot, the train-bands next the prison form into a circle, and discharge their pieces in sign of rejoicing. The corpses were then dragged to the scaffold; they were hung up by employing the locks and bandoliers of the muskets. A sailor tied them back to back by the feet, and fastened them to the highest steps of the gibbet, declaring that "criminals such as these ought not to be hanged by their heads." Their clothes were torn away and the fragments divided. Adrian Van Vaalm, a postboy, one of the chief conspirators, got hold of the velvet cloak of John de Witt, and ran through the streets, crying out, "Here are the rags of great John the traitor!"

In the midst of the howling of a mob thirsting for blood, the victims after death received treatment of the most barbarous kind. The two first fingers of John de Witt's right hand were cut off, as if to make him expiate the use he had put them to in signing and assenting to the Perpetual Edict. In wanton outrage the more excited wretches in the crowd mutilated the corpses in the most shameful and obscene fashion. As if to exhibit the last excesses of savage brutality, one of those at this abominable work took a piece of flesh, and boasted that he would eat it. The mangled remnants of the bodies were sold by auction. "I bought," an eyewitness said, "a finger of John de Witt's hand for two sous and a pot of beer."

The 20th of August, 1672, a day long remembered with grief in Europe, was the date of this execrable deed of blood.

The conduct of William in the revolution, of which we have briefly sketched the outline, was of a piece with his well-known character. With habitual self-command and prudence, he took care not to forestall events or to make a single premature step; he had the warrant of law for all his acts; he even refused with grave decorum the office of stadtholder when proffered to him, until he had been

formally absolved from the oath he had sworn to obey the fallen government. But he had not uttered a word to restrain the savage violence of his extreme partisans; he allowed the revolution to run its course and to raise him to power, without an attempt to moderate its disgraceful excesses; he acquiesced in anarchy, and profited by it. As for the brothers De Witt, we do not believe that he compassed or even connived at their deaths; his nature was superior to deeds of blood, and, as a statesman, he knew that crimes are blunders; but he artfully encouraged the movement against them; he did not raise a finger to avert their fate; he cynically remarked when all was over that it "was a lamentable but a fortunate accident;" and the principal murderers were, beyond question, rewarded or amnestied under his government. Yet genuine and even ardent patriotism undoubtedly blended with selfish ambition in prompting William to pursue this course of calculating but far-sighted statecraft. He felt, and he was soon to show, that the safety of the republic depended on himself; and, not to speak of the extraordinary powers he was before long to reveal to the world, the ties that linked him to royal houses, and that became the means of securing the aid of more than one monarchy to the Seven Provinces, caused him to be at this crisis their most fitting governor. These considerations tell strongly for him; nor ought we to blame his party for seeking a change in the government at this conjuncture. The services of John de Witt had, no doubt, been splendid; he was personally very little to blame for the comparatively defenceless state of the Provinces; he had labored more successfully than was generally supposed to combine alliances against the enemy; in the hour of trial he had proved himself not unequal to cope with a dire emergency. But he was the representative and head of a class which had in some measure betrayed its trust, and did not possess the national sympathy; he had always favored the alliance with France, and his policy was naturally condemned and decried when a French army was at the gates of Amsterdam. In these circumstances, a general movement to deprive him of office and to place in his stead a scion of a great race of heroes, who on other occasions had saved the commonwealth, was to be expected and was not blameworthy; what history justly censures are the abominable crimes of the revolution which was the consequence.

Success was ere long to justify William,

and to shed a ray of light on the States in their darkness. A turn in the tide of military events set in by the autumn of 1672. The progress of French conquest was slowly arrested; two other towns made a brave resistance, and Louis returned to France in the winter. In the following year the young statesman, who was now supreme in the Dutch republic, had contrived to win over the great elector and the emperor to a cordial alliance; and, though beaten over and over again in the field by the brilliant generals of France, he pursued his course until he had freed the territory of the States from their late invaders. By the Treaty of Nimeguen, largely due to the authority and renown of William, a fine province was indeed added to France; but the republic suffered no loss whatever; and a nation, lately on the verge of ruin, appeared once more as a great power in Europe. The result must be ascribed, in a great degree, to the ability and perseverance of the Prince of Orange. Yet we ought not to forget that it was John de Witt who prepared the way for the very league which ultimately saved the States from destruction, and who chiefly promoted the heroic purpose through which the French were stayed in their career of conquest. After the tragic death of the grand pensionary, the history of the republic, and indeed of Europe, ran into a new and eventful course; and a period of violent changes and wars, surpassing those of his youth and manhood, and more permanent in their general results, opened on a troubled and long harassed world. The broad consequence was to destroy forever the menacing ascendancy of the Bourbon monarchy, to assure England supremacy at sea, and to reduce the power of the Dutch republic; and the order of things established at the Peace of Utrecht proved for many years an enduring settlement. That state of Europe, which it was one main object of the policy of John de Witt to assure, has been made impossible in the march of events. His republic is now a third-rate monarchy, no longer resting on France by land while endeavoring to restrain her ambitious neighbor, and no longer the rival of England at sea; and the aspirations of the Dutch statesman are among the forgotten dreams of the past. Nevertheless history still does justice to the wisdom of his far-sighted views on the ambitious pretensions of Louis XIV.; and the barrier fortresses of the eighteenth century, and the free and neutral Belgium of our own, attest his clear

and sagacious forethought. We have endeavored briefly to trace the outlines of the life and career of a great worthy, not without faults as a ruler of men, but eminent among the deep-thinking statesmen whom Europe looks up to with love and reverence.

From Good Words.
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

A MODERN ROMANCE.

BY SARAH TYTLER, AUTHOR OF "CITOVENNE JACQUELINE," "LADY BELL," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A FLAG OF TRUCE.

IRIS hung her head, and gave a piteous sigh at the lamentable coincidence, but before she could say a word she heard a voice she ought to know, and looking round she saw Marianne Dugdale hurrying down the "loaning" to the bleaching-green. In a moment the swollen burn, the spread-out clothes, and the peasant figure of Jeannie, with her sleeves rolled up to her shoulders, and her linen apron, seemed to whirl round with Iris and vanish out of her sight; and the folly of last evening, and the abandonment and fright of this morning, to dwindle into the faintest confused dream.

"I have come back for you, Iris, as soon as I could," Marianne kept saying; "we must start immediately and join granny."

"But I thought she had gone by the first train," said Iris, in bewilderment.

"No, she missed it, by the greatest good luck. Oh! I've been so vexed; but we can't stay to talk about it now. We'll have plenty of time afterwards. It was a horrid shame: but she has heard from Sir William, and she has been forced to give in, stubborn as she is. Come along, like a duck. I've ordered out your trunk, which was left behind, too. I tell you Lady Fermor is half dead already, lying on a sofa in the waiting-room. We can't keep her there all day, and propose to travel by night. It would be the death of a woman at her age, and I'm sure we don't wish to have her death at our doors, whatever she may have done to us. The stableman is giving us fresh horses, and if we don't lose a moment we shall still be in time for the midday train."

"The midday train!" cried Iris excitedly; "but Sir William Thwaite is going by the midday train!"

"What although he is?" protested Marianne impatiently. "He won't take a bite of us. We've travelled long enough with him to know he's perfectly inoffensive. Besides, he's not at our station. I told you he wrote to granny; and though she did not show me the note I believe he must have driven to the next station. Oh! don't be a goose, Iris. Let us get away instantly."

There was little power of resistance left in Iris, even if she had not seen, so far as she was able to see, that Marianne's presence was protection; and that to rejoin Lady Fermor at once, however disagreeable it might be for both, would probably serve as the best refutation to any attempt to maintain an outrageous story. But Iris did not go without bidding good-bye to Jeannie, thanking her for her sympathy, and pressing on her a little gift by way of remembrance. "You see my friends have come back for me, Jeannie. It was all as I said."

"Aweel, miss, I hope it may end as you wuss," said Jeannie doubtfully, as if she were taking one of her grand far outlooks, and seeing rocks and shoals ahead. "I'm sure I trust so for your sake," much more cordially, in answer to the wistful look in Iris's eyes. "I think the maister wanted a word wi' you, but he's awfu' thrang wi' a pairty o' strangers seeking rooms for the fishing, and canna be spoken to the noo, while the young leddy winna wait a blink. Since yer ain folk hae turned up again and are takin' you awa' wi' them maybe it doesna matter. I'll keep your braw broochie and wear it, to mind me o' the young leddy who didna think hersel' aboon makin' a frien' o' me. Gude gang wi' you, mem, an' "

May you live happy and dee happy,
And never drink out o' a dry cappie."

Jeannie inadvertently wound up her farewell with one of the commonest couplets in use among her class for the benefit of a bride and bridegroom. It bore a startling resemblance to what it really was—a verse from a people's epithalamium.

Marianne would hardly wait for the leavetaking. She dragged Iris away to the chaise, and Iris did not look back—she felt there was no need. The steep-roofed white house with the red roses and the honeysuckle about its windows, standing in the paddock among the old trees, which she had greeted at first sight with so light a heart, seemed as if it were branded on her memory.

When the girls were in the chaise, the door shut, and the horses started, neither the rapid motion nor any amount of jolts on the country road could keep Marianne's mouth shut or take away her breath. "What a dreadful affair it has been! Could you have believed it possible for so old a woman to be possessed by such an evil spirit? I don't mean evil in a general way, to which one has got accustomed, I mean daring, defiant wrongdoing! But I must tell you about my share in it. Of course, when I was awakened in the middle of the night, and told we were going to the station, to breakfast at the railway inn and start with the early train—after I had got over the impression that King Lud had come back—and the alarm that the house had gone on fire—and the fear that granny was taking leave of her senses, I was so cold, and sleepy, and stupid, that I might have been standing on my head all the time. Soames ran up every five minutes to beg me to make haste; and as I was getting so much attention I thought you were in good time and were with Lady Fermor. I never missed you till we were in the chaise, and even then I imagined that it was by a blunder you were being left behind, just as I concluded Sir William was on the box. I cried out to granny that you were not there, and I called you by name, but she had the strength to pull me down on the seat, and put her hand on my mouth. I was so taken by surprise that I could not free myself. Besides, all the time she was chuckling and laughing so as to put me off my guard, and persuade me the whole manœuvre was some good joke, of which I should presently see the point, and then I might laugh with my neighbors. But when the explanation came it was a string of cock-and-bull nonsense, of which I did not believe one word. She said Sir William Thwaite and you had been lovers years ago. What a story, Iris! She told me that you had not behaved well to him—another story!—but had trifled with him, and pretended to put him off. Then he went away in a pet and made a low marriage. But all that was over, and now you wanted to make it up with him; and you would have done so a good deal sooner if I had not stood in the way—she had the coolness to say so. She assured me that your coming in as the bride last evening was not to serve me, or anybody save yourself, though I had been so silly as to be taken in. You intended the step as a piece of encouragement to Sir William to come on again. I might be sure

he understood it perfectly and accepted it, so now you both understood each other; and it would be the kindest service your friends could render you—it would be doing by one's neighbor as one would be done by one's self, to go away and leave you to each other. You were really married in the Scotch fashion, and if you cared to be married over again in church with flying colors, you could be so any day, though it was not at all necessary. Everybody knew that Border marriages were perfectly good in the eyes of the law. Now, Iris, did you ever hear such a rigmarole? Would you not have thought that granny, however full of malice, had too much brains to concoct such sensational trash?"

Iris sat dumb for a moment, then she asked desperately, "And what did you say and do?"

"Oh! I was so disgusted and enraged on my own account that I behaved beautifully; yes, I did, Iris. I was perfectly quiet and polite. I said it was an entire mistake; I knew it to be so; and that the moment I got to the station I would look out for a curricule and go back and fetch you. I would explain everything to the station-master, and if he refused to attend to me I would demand to be taken before a magistrate and tell my story. She and Soames might go on if they pleased; you and I would follow after. We were old enough to take care of ourselves; indeed, I was not sure that we should not manage it better than some of our elders could do it for us. Anyway, I would be torn to pieces by wild horses before I entered the train without you. She gave an ugly grin, and asked if I wanted Sir William for myself. But I was her match for once. I said she was at liberty to think so if she chose. I had made up my mind she meant to give me up as a raging lunatic before I could open my mouth to the station-master; but the train steamed out of the station just as we drove up. Then she was so stiff, and had such difficulty in getting out of the chaise, that I could not leave her to Soames, who looked frightened out of her wits. I had to help and see poor, miserable old granny laid on a sofa, and order brandy and tea for her. She was nearly two hours in coming round. I think now it was a trick, but at the time I got as frightened as Soames, and dared not turn my back. What brought her to herself at last was a man on horseback, with a letter from Sir William Thwaite to her. Then, sure enough, she looked like herself in a second, sat up,

and read the letter. I think she said something about a weak fool, who did not know his own mind, and could not play his game, though the cards were put into his hands. At last she turned round and told me, 'Girl, do as you will; you are a deluded idiot for your pains. Do you think Sir William has been making up to you all these weeks? He may have given you reason to think so, to serve his own purpose; but he has been sighing and dying for that saint and fool of a cousin of yours since first he set eyes on her. There is no accounting for tastes. But if he is not man enough to grasp his prey when it is within his reach he is not worth my help. Take your own way, and much good may it do you. But remember, if you are not back before the next train, I shall start with Soames, and my dutiful grandchildren may find their way back to me as they can.' As if we could not, Iris! Never mind her, darling; don't look so horribly cast down. Why should we care? Don't we know granny by this time? And though she is a great misfortune to everybody connected with her—nobody can deny that—still don't you think it is worst of all for herself? And you have me; I have not failed you."

"I cannot help caring, Marianne," said Iris, with a wan wavering smile. "It was so cruel."

"But it is not as if there had been anything in it, as if Sir William had cared for you, or you for him, that you should take it so to heart and not laugh at it now that it is over, as at any other passing annoyance. Iris, was there ever anything in it, any foundation for what she said? Have you been hiding the truth from me all this time?" cried Marianne, dropping the rare caressing touches she had been indulging in, drawing back into her corner of the chaise and staring at her cousin suspiciously and jealously.

"There was nothing to conceal," said Iris faintly, "except that long ago as it seems to me now, when Sir William first came to Whitehills, we were thrown a good deal together. Grandmamma encouraged it and wished to make a match between us, until he fancied he cared for me, and asked me to marry him and I refused him—that is all, Marianne."

"And enough too," said Marianne sarcastically, "and I suppose you also refused Ludovic Acton."

"Oh no!" declared Iris with a weary little laugh, "for the very good reason that I never had the opportunity—King

Lud to my knowledge never cared for any girl save one."

"I don't know," said Marianne discontentedly. "I feel as if I had lost my faith in mankind, and womankind to boot. Why, I might have fallen in love with Sir William!" she exclaimed naïvely.

"When he would doubtless have returned the compliment."

"No, not if he had begun by sighing and dying for you, as granny said. I am not an utter fool, Iris," protested Marianne hotly, "though I may be a simpleton in believing in those I thought my friends. You are not a girl likely to be forgotten by a man like Sir William Thwaite. I should never have dreamed of putting you out, any more than of your keeping all this back from me, when I believed I knew everything about you, even when I told you — what I told last evening."

"My dear little cousin, be reasonable," Iris exerted herself to entreat. "The story was an old one, dead and buried for years. Was it for me to dig it up, out of its grave, to go and boast that an unlucky man had once put himself into my power, and I had abused his confidence after many days? Would you have had me do that? You could see for yourself that there was nothing between Sir William Thwaite and me, that we were no more than friends."

Marianne was silent for a long time, with her dark eyes cast down and a lowering brow. She suddenly looked up and it darted into her head that Iris's little face had grown colorless in the course of twelve hours, that there were dark rings under her eyes, and that her hands trembled as they lay loosely in her lap. She had been insulted and persecuted almost more than she could bear, and here was the girl in whose favor Iris had interposed, proceeding to persecute the victim, in turn, out of sheer unworthy vanity and exacting pride. "I am a heartless creature, worse than I could have thought possible," Marianne cried. "I beg your pardon, my pet, if you will let me call you so, you who were so good to me, and it must have cost you much more than I guessed."

"Yes, it cost me something," said Iris simply, "because I did not like the play in itself, and it was inevitable that there should be some awkwardness. But neither of us knew what we were doing, or had any notion what it might lead to. Don't speak of it," said Iris with a shiver, "I cannot talk of it yet."

"Just let me say one thing: if I had been in your place and she had done it to me, and if I had quarrelled with King Lud and he had come to hear the garbled story, oh, Iris, Iris, I should have been lost. My dear, my dear, I ought to go down on my knees to thank you, and I do thank you with all my heart."

"I know it, and it is some comfort to have served you."

"At your own expense! Oh! I must do something for you — not that I can ever repay you, but to prevent your being a scapegoat for me. If not, I shall break my heart for having brought you into such trouble, and he will never forgive me after all, for he is as fond of you as if you were one of his sisters."

"Don't speak of it," Iris repeated imploringly.

"It drives me wild when I think I have been deceived," confessed Marianne ingenuously, after another pause, "not that you deceived me — at least you could not help it. But I wonder if it was all a piece of imagination on my part that Sir William liked me a little?"

"I am sure he liked you very much," said Iris promptly; "you were so bright, you made him chaff you and laugh with you as I never saw him do with any one else. You know he is rather silent and serious for a young man."

"Yes," said Marianne doubtfully, "but I thought he sometimes looked at me sadly, as well as kindly, as if he would like to take care of me. He knew granny of old, and he thought I was not in very good hands, and he might be a better protector; but that would have been a great mistake," shaking her head, "and I believe he was thinking of his old love, his true love yesterday when I brought you to him. A great glow came into his face — I was looking more at King Lud, naturally, but I saw it; and don't you remember he said 'I will,' as if his heart was in his mouth? Could he have fancied for an instant that the scene was real? Then what a temptation to him granny's behavior must have been! Dearest Iris, can the jest not become earnest, and you two friends be as happy as King Lud and I shall be some day?" cried Marianne, clasping her hands on her knees and leaning over to her cousin.

"For shame's sake, don't talk such nonsense, Marianne!" said Iris with asperity at last. "You ought to know that there is no foundation for your suggestion," and Marianne was silenced for once.

The girls arrived in time for the train, and Lady Fermor had so far recovered that she was on the platform. She looked them over, then spoke to Iris with an effrontery which was almost without parallel. "So you have taken us in, Iris," she said lightly and airily, with a double meaning in her words, and yet as if nothing had happened.

It gave her granddaughter strength to assert herself. "You have not kept your promise to me, Lady Fermor," Iris said. "You might have told me that you wished to get rid of me and I should have gone away honorably, as I did before. I shall go away again as soon as I can."

"Without asking my leave, no doubt?" exclaimed her ladyship, raising her eyebrows.

"I did ask your leave, and now I may take it for granted."

"As you will, Miss Compton. I am too old to parley with you."

It was a silent party that travelled across the grey Border moors, through the more fertile portion of Dumfriesshire up to the heathery hills of Annandale.

When the train drew up in the Moffat station, long shadows were falling across the platform, but Iris, who sat by the nearest door, distinguished a well-known figure in the shadow and drew back aghast. Sir William Thwaite had come on from Dumfries, and was standing like a sentinel on duty—with only a heightened color to indicate any trace of discomposure—prepared to hand the party out.

"You here, Thwaite?" cried Lady Fermor in loud challenge. "Well, we've been playing at cross-purposes, it seems; but it is lucky that we have shaken ourselves right, come together, and all turned up at our destination. Have you made any inquiry about the moor—whether the birds are shy or not?"

He had no reply for her, beyond helping her carefully out of the carriage and leading her away. By that time Iris understood what his change of plans meant. His presence there as well as hers was best for making everything be as it had been, and for putting out of mind the *mauvais quart d'heure* which had intervened. If he had not come immediately, and the two had not met again without delay, she felt as if their re-encountering each other would have been intolerable. Now it was still so much a matter of course, and the true gloss was so impressed on an idle farce, that before he parted from them in the lobby of the hotel Iris could go up to him in the presence of

Lady Fermor, Marianne, and Soames, and gently return to him his little packet, saying, "Thank you very much, Sir William; you see I have not needed your loan."

CHAPTER XL.

A SUITOR.

FOR the next few days the party returned to their former habits. The sole evidence that there had been any disturbance of the company's tranquillity remained in a certain constraint which clung about their intercourse, a disinclination to allude to their halt on the Borders, and an utter avoidance of a topic which had been much discussed before.

Yet the forbidden topic cropped up occasionally, even without Lady Fermor's instrumentality. When the ladies and their squire were strolling about the streets of the little town, and had come back to the street in which their comfortable old inn was situated, some conjecture was hazarded about its age. Marianne Dugdale insisted they would not find an old inn in Scotland of a later creation than Prince Charlie's time. A respectable tradesman passing by, and catching the tenor of the conversation, took it upon him to supply the date and oblige the party with a gratuitous piece of information. "Auld Lord Dundonald, the great sailor, came on here with his bride after their runawa' marriage. Ye may mind the marriage was disputed in a court of law after Tam Cochrane had bidden a long fareweel baith to his honors and his disgrace, and my leddy was a bitter-tongued weedow woman, driven, puir sowl, to fecht baith for and against her ain sons."

"The folly is in the air," said Lady Fermor sarcastically; "shall we consult your safety, Thwaite, and flee back to England?"

"I do not know myself in any danger, my lady," said the person addressed, stiffly and sternly, while Marianne talked fast to Iris of climbing the hill behind the town, which was somehow connected with hanging and the gallows. The younger members of the party continued as indefatigable as ever in their business of sight-seeing. They walked, rode, and drove to the pretty mineral well in its nook among the hills, to "lone St. Mary's Loch," with its silver strand, where the images of Scott and Hogg and Wordsworth for the moment effaced all private phantoms, to the spot where Tweed, Clyde, and Annan are near akin in their origin,

to the weird, lichen-covered oaks of Lochwood, like trees of another world, to the colossal green hollow known as "the Devil's Beef-tub," to "fair Kirkconnel Lea," the scene of the most wildly tragic and deeply pathetic of Scotch ballads, which greatly took the young people's fancy.

On the little company's return from one of their excursions they were amazed to find the big body, big face, and sandy moustache of King Lud in the man who was standing smoking and looking out for them at the lan-door. He had done more than keep his word. He had spoken of seeing them again before he sailed; but that was comparatively a vague prospect; he had said nothing of returning so soon to make up their party and finish their excursion. He looked solemn in answer to the gay banter which Marianne Dugdale, after an instant of silent delight, was able to rain upon him. "Were all your friends from home, Mr. Acton? Has your ship sailed without you? Did you think we should be robbed and murdered without the protection of your doughty arm in the old land of Border reivers? I could do better than that, if I tried — like the duchess in Wonderland, I could make myself picturesquely charming, and come over the Scotch loons with my soft English tongue."

Iris, whose nerves had been thoroughly shaken, was divided between two sources of apprehension. Had Ludovic Acton taken it into his head to read up information, and somehow discovered for himself the dangerous nature of their late entertainment, and had he come all the way from the rectory, during the small amount of leave that was likely to remain to him, to put her on her guard, to volunteer his evidence, and to save everybody from sorrow and injury, or was his mother worse; and, if so, why had he quitted her?

The first time the old friends were alone for a few minutes, King Lud cleared up the mystery, his manner presenting a nice blending of sheepishness and burning anxiety. He had got his promotion; he was now a captain in her Majesty's navy, with his appointment to a ship a matter of days. But before these days were ended he must avail himself of his promotion to bring to a close the suspense which, he maintained, was worse than sharks, icebergs, and torpedoes all taken together. Of course he could not run away with Marianne Dugdale, though they were in Scotland. He was so bent on his narrative that he did not notice how Iris winced

at the dry joke. Neither could the most sanguine man in his profession have hoped to marry her before sailing. But if Miss Dugdale, and her friends for her, would condescend to have anything to say to him, would consent to an engagement, he did not think, unless she was less freshly simple and modest in her tastes, less nobly and gloriously unworldly, than he believed her to be, that the engagement need be very long. He could show flattering letters from some of the swells of the Admiralty and good-natured commendations from his old commanders, which he had never so much as given to the family at home to read and exult over, because, naturally, his people would think a great deal too much of such bosh, and he hated bounce and palaver. It would be the first time that he had counted on them as any good, if they would satisfy Marianne Dugdale and her friends that a fair, steady rise in his profession lay before him. He had not let the grass grow beneath his feet. Modest, retiring King Lud, under the influence of the great passion of his young manhood, had already rushed down to Devonshire, introduced himself to Mr. Dugdale, and interviewed him. The spick-and-span captain had explained his not too elevated but hopeful position, and requested the father's permission to address his eldest daughter. The poor gentleman was neither propitious nor unpropitious. He was engrossed with his own affairs, to which the marriage of one of his daughters belonged certainly, but only in a subsidiary degree. Young Acton might end by becoming a rear-admiral, when Marianne would have done very well for herself. Even if he stopped short with being a commodore he was not to be despised. Nay, a naval captain's pittance did not mean such starvation to a small family as a country gentleman's reduced rents, from an estate groaning under a burden of mortgages, threatened ruin to the head of the house with his helpless wife and daughters. The officer and his wife would begin housekeeping with only a couple of mouths to fill, while Mr. Dugdale had nearly half-a-dozen to satisfy.

On the other hand, what had the dowager Lady Fermor to say on the matter? By making a marriage displeasing to the late Lord Fermor's testatrix she might be lost — not only to Marianne, but to the whole family of Dugdale.

Mr. Dugdale had a natural affection for his daughter; but he could not afford the sacrifice. In the end the eager suitor

was referred to his father's prodigal parashioner.

The sentence filled King Lud with chagrin — well-nigh hopelessness. "I know she has other views for her granddaughter," he groaned in Iris's ear. "Do you think there is the slightest chance for me in applying to the old lady?"

Iris could not in sincerity say she had an exalted opinion of his chances in that quarter; but she managed to remark with some ambiguity she did not think Lady Fermor had any definite designs at present for the disposal of Marianne.

"There is Thwaite," alleged King Lud gloomily, "almost a member of the family. He has been its cavalier ever since Lady Fermor and Miss Dugdale came up to town."

It was clear that he had heard nothing of the sequel to the Border play in which he had taken part — nor was he likely to hear, Iris was thankful to think, unless his relations to the family became very intimate.

"There would be disgusting advantages in that match," King Lud bemoaned himself.

"But Marianne is not mercenary," Iris reminded him.

"Of course not; her dear vagaries, her sweet waywardness and irresistible originality are all utterly destitute of mercenariness."

Iris laughed and nodded; it was comical to her to hear King Lud, who had been wont to take things easy, by his own confession violently in love.

"But Thwaite himself is a good fellow, for all that has come and gone. I always liked him. If he made a great mistake, went wrong and smarted for it, he has come honorably through a lengthened probation since then. She is just the generous girl to long to make up to him for what he has suffered, to glory in overlooking his small deficiencies, and be willing to risk herself to keep him straight. No," said Ludovic Acton in dolefully magnanimous self-depreciation, "I cannot pretend to Thwaite's advantages in any respect. Why, even in the matter of looks he has it all on his side. He is a comely, well-drilled lout, while I'm a whey-faced, moon-faced, clumsy sea-lubber."

Iris laughed till the tears came into her eyes, she wanted so much to comfort and encourage him without breaking faith, and without buoying him up with false hopes where Lady Fermor was concerned. "I think I may say if grandmamma has not entirely given up contemplating White-

hills as a possible establishment for Marianne, she has not been looking at it in that light very lately."

"Oh, thank you, Iris, you are a good soul. I don't wonder that Marianne adores you," said Ludovic as gratefully as if Iris had gone far to secure to him the passionately coveted boon. "Only Marianne might spare a little common civility to a fellow who adores her."

Although she is forced to dissemble her love, Why need she kick him down-stairs?"

"Have patience," Iris told him. "Do they know at the rectory? What does Lucy think? What does the rector say? Is the mother pleased?"

"Oh, my people are as good as gold, as usual. They say, if my happiness is concerned that is everything. They are only longing to make her better acquaintance. What a fool I am to speak of her as if she were certainly mine! I can depend upon them doing everything they can to befriend her when I am away."

"Happy man! at least you have acted on the most manly, straightforward principles, and whatever comes of it, you will have the comfort of that reflection," said Iris warmly.

But the newly made captain did not see what else he could have done. The reward was more and more according to his heart than Iris or any one else would have dared to hope. Strange to say, Lady Fermor did not oppose the engagement, beyond saying that she thought it as foolish as such contracts usually were. But if the young pair chose to enter into this one she would not interfere. She craved leave to inform Captain Acton, in case of awkward mistakes, that her granddaughter Marianne Dugdale would have no more money from her than a couple of hundred pounds to buy her trousseau if she ever needed one, and perhaps another couple of hundreds to buy her mourning on the death of the speaker. She had never intended to give Marianne more, unless on a contingency of which there had ceased to be any possibility. She would write to Mr. Dugdale to this effect.

The truth was that Lady Fermor did not believe in engagements, short or long, and never had cared a straw for Marianne Dugdale except as a living toy to amuse the old lady, and an instrument of vengeance upon Iris Compton.

King Lud was free to address his mistress, yet even the freedom might have had a disastrous issue but for recent events, and the knowledge that the suitor

would sail and very likely be in another hemisphere within the month. Marianne was taken unawares. She laughed and pouted and even cried a little as if she were a very ill-used little person, then suddenly threw down her arms and surrendered at discretion, making no terms, beyond the right of teasing King Lud, which the infatuated fellow was only too content, according to ancient example, to let her do. Even this remnant of power was in danger of being wrested from her grasp, every time his approaching departure crossed her mind and clouded over the whole universe to her.

It was something to see a good fellow and an innocent child so radiantly happy as those two, though his lapsing leave was to subdue their happiness long before the summer had ended. Lady Fermor called the pair a couple of lunatics; but Iris caught herself and Sir William regarding the two with the mild, patient benignity of true guardians and sponsors.

There was no evidence of resentment on Sir William's part on account of his faintly and fitfully foreshadowed office of "guide, philosopher, and friend" to Marianne Dugdale being filched from him. If a kind of wistful look came into his blue eyes at times it did not interfere with the perfect cordiality of his congratulations to King Lud and the young lady, and she received such demonstrations better from him than from any one else, Iris not excepted.

It seemed as if nothing were to be wanting to the happiness of the lovers. King Lud had been proudly and affectionately desirous that if it could be managed, Marianne should go on a visit to the rectory before he got his sailing orders. Included in the desire was the natural longing to take leave of her in his father's house, and to consign her under the ordeal to the tender keeping of those who would be sharing her sorrow with her. Even this wish was granted. Lady Fermor became complacent to an almost alarming extent; Marianne might go, since she had got her father's permission. The old lady even volunteered to render the project more feasible by sending Soames to chaperon the lovers, and bring back some articles of dress which Soames's mistress wished her maid to get from Lady Fermor's wardrobe at Lambford.

So this idyl disappeared from the contemplation of the edified spectators at Moffat, and anything more they were to learn of it, in the mean time, must be from letters — Marianne's hurried but highly

appreciative announcement of her safe arrival and good reception; Lucy Acton's kind if more composed and modified reports. Yes, Marianne was a dear girl, and it was delightful to see King Lud so exultant; who could resist it? Marianne was original and a little wilful. She had found a broken mousetrap which had exercised her spirit a good deal. She had sent the children to fetch all the mouse-traps in the house to be inspected by her, and had set about mending them on the spot, so that Gerald was her chum from that moment. Marianne had got round the rector by looking out his sermons for him, and practising the hymns he liked best in order to help the choir in church. She had won all the hearts of the children — of the boys especially — at the school feast. As for the curates she saved her, Lucy, an immense amount of trouble, for Marianne could twist them round her finger, and did so without once provoking King Lud to jealousy. Yes, they all liked dear Ludovic's future wife very much, and Lucy was convinced that though there might be a little hitch here and there — as where was there not in human relations? — still the family circle into which the stranger had entered, instead of being divided into hostile factions with the members set against each other by her means, would continue as united and attached as ever.

It was plain the Actons were behaving well, as might have been expected from them. They were making the best of their son and brother's engagement to Marianne Dugdale, and so taking the wisest course to preserve his and their dignity and happiness.

CHAPTER XLI.

FALSE SEEMING.

DATING as nearly as possible contemporaneously with the departure of Ludovic Acton and his promised wife under the staid wing of Soames, there began for Iris one of the strangest experiences of her tried life. She was alone with Lady Fermor and Sir William Thwaite. Lady Fermor continued in the blindest mood. Whether she were seeking to atone for her late outrage, or whether she were "fey," according to the old Norse superstition, and her last days had come, there could be no question of her indulgence to her granddaughter and her kindness to Sir William, even when they crossed her will and thwarted her plans.

But along with the old lady's bluff good-

humor there commenced to peep out an inference drawn by Lady Fermor which was almost intangible in its expression at first. Yet it was a subtle, entangling, bewildering implication, leading to a spirit of perturbation and confusion on the part of those who could not deny what was not charged against them. They feared so much as to admit the hint, lest the faintest whisper of its existence should lend tangibility to the light material and afford a basis for the whole towering edifice of doubt and suspicion.

She treated the two young people as if they were a couple of children, or the nearest relations. She would have sent them out, in the intervals of Sir William's sport, on the longest *tête-à-tête* rambles and riding excursions without so much as a groom to bear them company. When, because of the unaccustomed nature of the liberty extended to them, they were instinctively shy of it and of each other, she chid them gaily for not availing themselves of their privileges, as if they abstained from them entirely on her account.

"You two" — she had got to coupling them together continually — "are a great deal too considerate. It ain't in me to be a kill-joy, but you make me ashamed, though I must confess that it is a failing I am not given to indulging in. Why should you not have your good time as well as others? Don't let me interfere with you."

Lady Fermor had naturally her special seat in her own window of the drawing-room, and she took to barricading herself in it with screens, cushions, footstools, and little tables for her various refreshments — biscuits, fruit, wine, tea, as her habits and the hour required. She had always been sufficient for herself, but she appeared to be becoming impatient even of the company of a young man of her own choosing, and to be contracting a passion for solitude.

"You can keep to your own window. You must have a great deal to talk about — young couples always have. Old people have done with everything save thinking, and that, too, goes, I suppose, so that there is only sensation left, poor creatures that we are! But say your say while you have it to do, and want to be out with it; never mind me, I shan't hear a syllable at this distance."

While the party had been travelling Lady Fermor had resigned the head of the table to one of her granddaughters, but she had left the foot vacant. Now she elected that Sir William should play the 'host opposite Iris as the hostess.

And Lady Fermor told them to their faces, in the most innocent manner possible, so that they felt themselves behaving foolishly to blush, that they became their relative positions and discharged their respective duties admirably.

Iris did her best to supply Soames's place in the maid's temporary absence, and was often alone with her grandmother in her bedroom. On these occasions Lady Fermor was even ostentatious in professing her entire satisfaction with Iris's efforts to serve her, which grew bungling, from sheer astonishment and trepidation at the gracious forbearance with which the girl's worst blunders were borne, and the praise indiscriminately awarded to the whole performance.

"I am very much obliged to you, child; you are too attentive; but I ought not to keep you from other duties."

"Grandmamma, you are laughing at me," cried Iris in desperation. "What duties have I in comparison with the obligation to wait upon you, if you will let me? I know I do it very badly, but I hope to improve, and become a proficient abigail by the time Soames comes back."

"You undervalue yourself far too much. There are plenty of forward, encroaching persons to be met with everywhere; more than that, excessive humility, which is often affectation, does not suit your station in life. There now," said Lady Fermor, after Iris had enveloped her grandmother in her dressing-gown and removed her wig, replacing it by one of the exploded nightcaps, which are only in vogue to shelter the bald pates of octogenarians, "go down and entertain William."

Lately Lady Fermor had taken to dropping the "Thwaite" and the "Sir" before the Christian name, in speaking apart with Iris of the squire of Whitehills. The new habit smote upon Iris's ears with a peculiarly familiar, homelike effect; when the name was coupled with a dogmatic recommendation to "entertain" its bearer, Iris's breath was taken away. She was not even fit to meet the cool command with the calm assurance that Sir William could entertain himself. She did not say it, but she retired to her own room, and put her hands before her face.

At the same time neither Iris nor Sir William could resent mere insinuations, which after all might owe the most of their significance to what might have become their morbid self-consciousness and troubled fancies. She knew as well as if she had heard it what would have been her grandmother's answer if she, Iris, had

protested against the inference cunningly drawn. Lady Fermor would have cried in the height of incredulous astonishment, "Child, what did I say? What could you think was my meaning?" and an explanation of what Iris might have thought, as it appeared unjustifiably reviving all the horrible mischief that had been set at rest, was too dreadful for a delicate-minded girl to face without the utmost necessity for the encounter.

Iris seriously revolved the alarming doubt if her grandmother's mind were giving way at last, when one day, on two occasions, both when the ladies were sitting by themselves and when Sir William was with them, Lady Fermor did what she had once done before on paper, addressed Iris as "Lady Thwaite." "What is your opinion of the weather, Lady Thwaite?" "Lady Thwaite, have you seen the birds in Sir William's bag?"

Iris did not answer. She only looked down with startled dismay and shifting color. She could not have raised her eyes to meet Sir William's for the world.

The incorrectly applied title might have proceeded from a lapse of memory in an old woman, though Lady Fermor hitherto had not been liable to such lapses. Anyhow she did not show that she had observed her mistake by calling herself back or apologizing for it. Her sole comment on Iris's dead silence on both occasions was by repeating her inquiries with a little impatience, without again naming the person spoken to. "Did you hear me? What is your opinion of the weather?" "Have you seen Sir William's grouse?"

If the misapplications of the name were not a slip of the tongue, if they formed an index that Lady Fermor's once acute and powerful, though neither fine nor cultivated intellect, and clear, steady brains, were, as she had predicted, losing their edge, even reeling on their throne, the shape which the disorder of her faculties had taken would not be at all wonderful. It would be almost natural that the first of a throng of coming delusions should point to her conviction of the accomplishment of a scheme on which she had so set her imperious will that one of her last acts had been to seek to establish an unpardonable fraud by coercing the victims to submit to it, and ratify it, out of shame and terror for a woman's good name.

It was a new, vague danger to be dreaded, along with the constant, miserable embarrassment to be endured.

Iris could hardly say how much Sir William Thwaite was struck or what he

felt. It was impossible to consult him on the point. Once he had betrayed every emotion of his soul in his face as in a mirror. Further experience of life had taught him to wear a mask to some extent; but in the course of the last few days the mask had fallen occasionally, though only with the effect of electrifying and baffling the beholder more completely. For the shifting expression was, after all, more perplexing than any steadiness of impenetrability.

The very material world around Iris; the old-fashioned inn to which Thomas Cochrane and his young wife had come after their runaway marriage; the braes over which the old moss-troopers had sped in many a moonlight foray, which had sometimes included a disconsolate bride snatched along with her living dowry of lowing kine and bleating sheep from the English side of the Border; the holiday watering-place among the hills, with the holiday company in which were various specimens of lovers, and no lack of newly wedded pairs come to spend their simple honeymoons — all began to assume an unreal, sympathetic, or mocking aspect to Iris. The strain was becoming too hard for her. She said to herself with despairing deliberation she could not bear it much longer. Her grandmother if she had been in her right mind had been very wicked to bring such trouble upon two people who had never wronged her, one of whom was her own flesh and blood. So soon as Soames returned, the girl would go away as she had gone before, to return no more to Lady Fermor or to Lambford. King Lud would be gone, and Marianne Dugdale ought to come back.

She would tell no one of her departure this time. She was to be a runaway twice over, but never a runaway bride. She felt she would rather die than tempt Sir William Thwaite to believe she had been willing to appropriate her share of the *rôle* which had been imposed upon them both. She would go to Mrs. Haigh, and if she could not receive her, she might find a place for Iris, safe, however humble. She would work her fingers to the bone and her eyes till they were blind in their sockets, to maintain herself in honest, honorable independence; beyond that nothing signified.

Iris's purpose was deferred by Soames's protracted absence. Lady Fermor did not grudge it; in fact she was at the bottom of the delay. She had caused a journey which might have been accomplished

in less than twenty-four hours, to be broken by a halt of half as many days. She was lengthening the halt by keeping Soames at Lambford executing commission after commission for her mistress at Knotley, Birkett, and Cavesham, commissions sent to Soames at the rate of half-a-dozen fresh orders every morning. Iris gave the woman credit for fretting over the length of her holiday. But Iris could wait — all the more easily in the end, that Sir William had gone away on an unexplained errand which was to last a day, but detained him for a couple of days. Lady Fermor extended her afternoon drive on both days, so that she might finish by taking the station on her way home and there await her friend's return. Iris told herself that she wished he might not return at all during her stay at Mof-fat, and she thought the wish must have looked out at him from her eyes when he did appear, and Lady Fermor was calling to him — careless who might hear her, that he was a naughty man to put her to the trouble of bringing Iris twice to the station to fetch him back to the inn; for after he had driven home with them, assisted Lady Fermor to alight, and handed her over to the landlady and her subordinates, he detained Iris for a moment behind her grandmother, to say, with an undercurrent of vexation and reproach in his voice, "I will go abroad and stay there, Miss Compton, if you wish it — you need fear no annoyance from me; you have but to say the word; I should be gone already, were it not that you are alone with Lady Fermor."

That was her own motive for delay, she reflected with an undefined, unreasonable sense of bitterness. Well, perhaps it was better they should understand each other thoroughly. But she only said, "Don't let any consideration with regard to grand-mamma or me interfere with your arrangements, Sir William; we shall do very well. You can see we have managed perfectly for ourselves during these two days; besides, Soames will turn up presently."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE WRONG ROOM.

THE mail from the south had come in, and Iris had left Sir William reading the newspapers to her grandmother and gone out for a solitary walk. She wanted to walk far and fast till she was wholesomely tired from bodily fatigue, to be braced by the strong north-country air, and to have the moorland wind blow away the cobwebs

which had lodged in her brain, stifling her common sense and torturing her nerves. She had climbed the hill Marianne had spoken of — one of those hills which are appendages to various towns in Scotland, being memorials of the last gruesome scene which followed the exercise of the jurisdiction of a baron's court.

Iris did not anticipate much seclusion in her walk, for the hill was not only frequented by visitors in the season, it was haunted from late spring to late autumn, as she could guess, by children seeking in succession birds' nests, blaberries, and blackberries; still she could find a quiet spot where she might sit down and rest and look at the wide, free view of hill and hollow and river, just broken here and there by patches of yellow corn-land, stretches of green pasture grass, bits of wood. She could realize that she was in a pastoral country where, whatever human discord broke the stillness, there was always a harmonious undertone made up of the bleating of sheep and the humming of bees among the heather, the occasional bark of a shepherd's dog, the constant trickle far and near of innumerable threads of water which rose and were fed among the hills, to feed in turn the bigger burns and the rivers rushing on to the sea. Overhead was the solemn grey sky of the north country, in which, though there was no sign of rain, the blue was not left long uninvaded, and the white of the fleecy clouds was brushed with a silvery grey, passing here and there to deeper, darker, though still clear tints of slate color.

Iris would fain have let the simplicity and peace of the landscape sink into her harassed mind, from which a fantastic nightmare could not be driven out. But she was not left alone to reason with herself, reassure and calm herself by recovering mental balance and spiritual faith, for almost the first thing she saw was Sir William's glengarry rising above the bracken as he pushed his way, regardless of the obstacles on a wrong track, to reach her. She was not safe even on the hill of ancient hangings. In despair, she sat quite still and let him come up and speak to her.

"I beg your pardon for intruding upon you, Miss Compton," he said humbly enough, panting a little from his reckless exertions to gain her side. "But I have something to say which I am taking the first opportunity to tell you by yourself. It is what you ought to know at once; I have no doubt you will be glad to hear it."

Iris turned upon him a questioning, ap-

prehensive, half-indignant glance. Then she bethought herself that he was not knowingly to blame for all the misery he had caused, that he was himself involved in the last misfortune. A rush of remorse amounting to tender friendliness came over her for the manner in which she was beginning to treat him, so that she spoke to him quite kindly. "In place of requiring you to apologize for interrupting my important meditations," she said, with rather a forlorn attempt at gaiety, "I ought to thank you heartily, Sir William, for taking so much trouble about something in which you think I have an interest," and she made room for him to sit down by her.

He threw himself down where she indicated and was silent for a moment, plucking the heather and looking, not at her, but straight before him with a far-away expression in his eyes. Perhaps he felt what he had already experienced more than once during this year, he was realizing the literal circumstances of a bygone dream, in which, however, all the premises had undergone a variation. Not least of all, though that was not in his count, his personal appearance and general air were changed since Iris had first known him. His manliness was more matured, much that had sat constrainedly and uneasily on him he now carried lightly and unthinkingly. He had the look of a plain, brusque, but not undignified country gentleman of the class into which his first sanguine backers had argued he would merge. The chestnut beard covered the somewhat dogged squareness of the jaw and the weakness of the chin, while the lines from the nose to the corners of the mouth were so defined as to give the leonine cast to the face. The fullness of forehead beneath the waves of hair had already a furrow or two, and the slight contraction of the brow seemed to set the blue eyes more deeply, and to cast a shadow over them. The face was still massive, tending to ruggedness as it grew older, with more of thoughtfulness and of calm repression and patient pain at the present moment than of its old stern tension of passionate impulse.

To Iris's surprise Sir William drew out his pocket-book and unfolded a written paper.

"I must first tell you where I have been, Miss Compton," he said, and his color deepened like a girl's while he spoke. "I've been back to —," and he mentioned the inn at which the party had made their last momentous halt.

She would have said, "What took you there?" but her lips would not utter the words.

He went on hurriedly, "I wished to see the landlord, who, so far from seeming a regular blackguard, appeared a respectable enough man. My object was to seek an explanation from him — if an explanation were needed — to ascertain what he had to say of the farce which Lady Fermor insists on keeping up."

"I dare say you were right," Iris forced herself to say, half inaudibly, with her eyes turned away, and falling by chance on the little bare hand, without the bridegroom's gift of a ring, lying languidly on her gown.

"I did not see him at first. By a curious coincidence Lady Fermor had written for him to come here; but he had to attend some sale. I waited for his return, and had a conversation with him. He told me the whole truth, and I made him write it down, and have it witnessed. I took a copy for Lady Fermor, and gave it to her within the last half-hour. This is for you; all you have to do is to keep it, and it will save you from further anxiety and vexation."

Iris took the sheet of ruled blue paper in bewilderment. The writing was the round clerly hand of the best old Scotch parish schools. The diction was not so unexceptionable; but though the intelligence it conveyed threw a new light on everything, the style ought not to have been incomprehensible, if it had not been that the letters and the sense of the words danced before Iris's eyes and understanding. She could not take them in for some moments. It was only by a supreme effort at self-control that she at last mastered the contents of the paper.

"This is to certify that my house of entertainment at —, being built on the very boundary line between the two countries — as there are plenty of records to prove what the Marches are — some of its rooms are in England and some in Scotland. The sitting-rooms which were lately occupied by Lady Fermor and party are both in England. No marriage ceremony performed according to Scotch law within the bounds of either of them would be legal, or could stand. This would be the case even though the contract had been entered into in good faith, with the full knowledge and concurrence of all concerned — whereas I am assured by Sir William Thwaite, who acted as the bridegroom in a performance of which I

got a glimpse, that the whole thing was a mere play or frolic, never intended by the principal persons engaged in it to go any farther.

"I wish to say for myself that I believe the fact of part of the house being in England and part in Scotland did not exist without abuse lang syne. Sometimes, to extort rewards and bribes, the couples who had whiles betrayed others were themselves betrayed, and were handed over unwed, when they had thought otherwise, to the friends at their heels. Or, what was baser still, bride and bridegroom had to cower their whole life lang before the auld innkeepers and the mock minister, and pay sweetly for their silence on what, in point of law, was no better than a mock marriage. Or, if the bridegroom were a villain, he could cast off his bride through the villainy of his helpers.

"I had no suspicion of what was going on the other night till I was warned by one of the servant lasses, who mistook jest for earnest. I came up, as fast as my feet would carry me, to shift the party into the opposite room, which had first to be cleared of its company. By the time that had been done the business was all but finished, while it looked to me more like a foolish joke than a serious weddin'. In that case, with no harm intended or done, I appeal to any innkeeper in his senses if it was for me to come forward and affront and displease titled customers. If I had got any proof that the marriage was really meant for a wedding which was to be carried out, I hereby solemnly declare that I would have come forward and told the truth at any cost.

"I admit when the old leddy started at break-of-day, leaving the couple behind, I misdoubted the joke and tried to get speech of her, but she would not hear me. Maybe she has minded that though, and so has sent for me to go all the way to Moffat to speak with her. And when the gentleman that stood for the bridegroom, who has now come back to clear up the story, left next, that same morning, I thought like the lave that he would be back again in no time, and that it would be soon enough then to warn him. It was rather a ticklish thing, if so be he thought he was wad, to tell him he was mistaken, and bear the wyte of the English rooms which belonged to the building of the house on the very Border a good wheen years before I was born.

"I meant also to speak to the young leddy, though she had sustained no wrong that I know of, but before I had word of

her intended departure she too had gone off with a friend that was sent back for her just at the moment when I was engaged with some pressing customers; and I could not think she would suffer harm in her friend's hands. However, the affair has been on my mind, and I have not been without fear that, jest or earnest, me, and more than me, might get into trouble about it yet. And I was on the eve of travelling as far as Moffat at my own ill convenience to obey the auld leddy's orders and make a clean breast of it to her, when the gentleman calling himself Sir William Thwaite, who is, according to his own account, bidding at the same inn in Moffat, came express to me, and saved me the journey. He has caused me to write this paper, which he is to show to the leddies. He'll certify that I have been ready to answer all his questions and to communicate to him the local disqualification, which attests beyond dispute that no legal marriage was, or could have been, celebrated in the front or in the back parlor on the second floor of my house of — on the evening of the 7th of August, 187—.

"(Signed) ANDREW PEEBLES

"(Witnessed) James Musgrave.

"Catharine Preston."

Iris was free; no further glamor could be thrown over an idle incident, and the finger of scandal would never point to her, even in her grave. But the result was something altogether different from what she had been brought to dread, and the man who had freed her, who thus voluntarily renounced the far-fetched ghost of a claim to her, was the same who in the hay-field at Whitehills had persisted against every remonstrance in declaring his desperate love for her, and maintained it was no light fancy, but a lifelong passion and sorrow. This was the man who dissolved the masquerade that yet seemed to bind them strangely together. But while it somehow smote her to the heart that he could do it, she cried out against herself for her disloyalty to herself and him, and told herself the truth, that if he had acted otherwise he must have degraded himself in her eyes, and she would have had the double anguish of learning to despise him at this date. She must not let him see what she thought; she must give him his due. She turned to him with her hands clasped tightly, and brilliant roses in the cheeks that were growing thin. "How shall I ever thank you, Sir William? If you had failed me

and made me suffer for a piece of folly, what would have become of me, and of you also? But you have behaved like the perfect gentleman and true friend that I have long known you to be."

"Come," he said, catching his breath and speaking with something of the old roughness, "don't make it too hard for a fellow. But I must speak out just this once, since we shall never allude to the subject again."

"You might have paid me back for what must have struck you as a girl's intolerable arrogance," she said, half under her breath.

"No, no," he corrected her quickly; "you are talking nonsense now. You could never be arrogant. It was I who was a presumptuous, deluded idiot."

"You have shielded and delivered me," she said sadly, "while I—I believe I have done nothing save injure you since the first time we met."

"How can you say so?" he cried impatiently—almost indignantly. "You made a man of me—by causing me to look up to what was far above my reach certainly—but when I fell back into the beast again have you forgotten how you came and saved both me and poor Honor?"

"Poor Honor!" echoed Iris, and the tears began to trickle down her cheeks in spite of herself, for she had been much tried lately, and the strain on her was becoming more than she could bear.

"Don't cry, Miss Compton, for mercy's sake," he implored. "I could not stand it. I could not answer for myself, though at my worst I would not have taken advantage of you in the way you seem to think I might have done. To make out, after one mad moment, that you had married me truly according to the Scotch law, or any law, and to call Lady Fermor to bear me out in the assertion, would have been to act like a rascal as well as a brute, to have lost your friendship, and I have been proud to possess that at least."

"And now we shall be friends always," she said wistfully.

"I don't know," he answered restlessly. "Yes, friends in heart I hope, if you will do me the honor. But it ain't as if I were another woman or a better man. I think I shall go abroad, as I proposed."

"All the same you will come back to Whitehills one day," she ventured with a faint smile.

"What, to find you—" he began vehemently, then stopped for an instant, and went on more quietly. "If I cared for you as you deserve to be cared for, I

should not regret finding you in a happier and safer home than where I first saw you, and shall always remember you, at Lambford. But I am a selfish dog."

She was silent now, breathing with soft quickness.

"I need not say Lady Fermor, though she has tried to be my friend," he remarked with rather a grim smile, "is no protector for you any more than she was for your cousin, Miss Dugdale. But you are another sort of girl—so much wiser and stronger in your gentleness. It is exactly as I said the other night at the station; forgive me for the liberty, but I cannot, as I am a man, endure to leave you with her."

She continued dumb. She did not say, as she had implied before, that whatever risk she ran it could be nothing to him; she did not upbraid him with hurting her by reminding her of her friendlessness; she did not bid him go again.

He looked at her with the keenest, most earnest scrutiny, flushing high while he looked. "I am sure you would not trifle with me, Miss Compton. You did not do it before, when I was a foolhardy ass. Perhaps you think it is impossible one man can twice err in the same indefensible way. You know I was such a blockhead as not to see through your cousin's merry fencing, and guess on which side her deliverance lay. I was tempted to feel that, if she would let me, I ought to come to the rescue, and not see her sacrificed as I had seen another bright, kind woman perish. It seemed all that was left for me to do. It was not giving up much, for I had not a grain of hope besides. But I could not venture to approach you, and propose to be your protector, not even after what has come and gone—you are too far above me."

She made a hasty deprecating movement to interrupt him, but he did not heed it.

"And it would be too great a mockery, I may as well say it, since I am in for it, though I may affront you again. You have said enough to show you will not mistake me—I love you as I love my life. I have done so from the first moment I saw you, I shall do it to my last gasp though you mayn't like it. I can't help it any more than you can. And I might have been content with your tolerance—like a scrap thrown to a dog—in the past; but though I've been down in the depths since then, things are different somehow with me, I could not be satisfied to-day with what I should perhaps have

caught at years ago. I am wiser, or I am prouder, though I have little enough to be proud of. I should not ask much, but I must have a grain — a living seed fit to sprout and grow. I know only too well what I have been, and how unworthy I am still, but if you could ever look over it, like the generous, gentle soul you are and were to poor Honor, why then I should be the proudest, gladdest fellow on earth. I would keep you as far as my life could save you, from care and sorrow. I would serve you with my best, and ask only a crumb of kindness, and that you yourself should be happy."

She spoke at last. "Not for Honor's sake," she faltered, "though I did care for her, but for your own — not a crumb, but all. Has it not been well won?" She laid her hand in his as she spoke, and her pure lips were there for his reverent awed lips to press, her sweet eyes to return shyly his blissful glances.

After the two had talked long together, Sir William suddenly announced, with a laugh which spoke volumes for the terms to which they had attained, "I have forgotten to tell you that Lady Fermor was so put out by the paper I brought her, she said she would set off for Lambford tomorrow, she would not wait for Soames."

"Well, it won't matter — will it? She did not forbid you to accompany her, I hope. I shall be very glad to see home again, to see them all at the rectory, and hear what they will say. Perhaps we may be in time to catch up King Lud, before he sails. Poor, dear Marianne, I am sorry for her now."

"Why in the world should you be sorry?"

"Because you are not going to sail, Sir William — ought I to tell you that?"

"If it does not hurt you to say it, it is very agreeable for me to hear it."

"But it will spoil you, and as it was only the other day that I refused to entertain you, I think you may have some notion how far I was from contemplating spoiling you then. We must not get on quite so fast. But I will say this, that I doubt if King Lud and Marianne are quite so happy as we are."

"I doubt it too, though I have only one reason to give for the doubt."

"I don't wish to hear that reason again to-day, I think I have heard it already. I mean because they have not been tried."

"Perhaps he would not agree with you, poor chap."

"Oh! but that was all a man's stupidity not to see through her flattering opposi-

tion. They have come together without one real tribulation to test them. They strike me at this moment as two quite inexperienced, light-hearted young persons, so that one fears — though one hopes not — that the cares and trials may all lie before them. Now we, though doubtless we have troubles by the score in store for us, have passed through fire and water, we know and can trust ourselves and each other."

There was trouble in his eyes at that very minute. "Trusted and tried, and never found wanting, I can say that of you, my sweetheart, but can you ever trust me?"

"Yes, William," she said with simple sincerity, and so earnestly that there was a little solemnity in her tones; "with all my heart. You have fought a good fight, and He who strengthened you for the battle will never suffer you to be vanquished. I shall be glad to be home again," she added more lightly, "I have been very unhappy there sometimes, but I feel as if that were all to be forgotten now, and only the peaceful, happy days to be remembered. I was never so long away from home before. Now that I have time to think of it, I want very much to see what changes have taken place in my corner of Eastwich during my absence."

"And you want to see Whitehills again, for Lambford cannot long be your home, you will begin to look on Whitehills very differently. We may go abroad and see the world, but we must settle at Whitehills; that will always be the most important place to us."

"You cannot tell how long ago I was told to give my most serious consideration to Whitehills. Your cousin, Lady Thwaite, will think I have taken her advice."

"Never mind what she thinks. I suppose she will be pleased, and she will forgive me. Well, she has forgiven me long ago. But I shall take to her now, for I cannot forget that it was by her means I saw my lady first."

"It was after that meeting I called you 'a good sort of young man' to grand-mamma."

"I am afraid I did not deserve the character. But, Iris, Lady Thwaite is the only pretence to a friend I can give you."

"And how many can I give you?" she said with an answering sigh.

"I think if you had known my sister Jen, you would have loved her, though she had to work to earn bread for her and

me, and was a washerwoman to the last day that I left her in peace."

"I am sure I should," said Iris with conviction. "Nobody, not you yourself, could have been so much obliged to her, and we should have had one chief source of interest in common."

"There is a good fellow who has been, next to you, since I lost Jen, the best friend I had in the world, though he would never call himself anything save my servant. He will be as proud as a peacock, as pleased as a pikestaff, to hear the great news."

"I know," said Iris, with a bright smile, "Bill Rogers. Tell him from me to wish us both joy. His sister has sometimes said that if I ever had a house of my own she would like to go with me. She may if grandmamma consents, mayn't she? Why, we have loads of faithful friends, William."

When the couple returned to the inn, they had tarried so long that Lady Fermor, in great dudgeon from another cause, had eaten her luncheon without them, and set out on her afternoon drive alone.

Sir William and Iris strolled into the inn-garden. She found an old-fashioned rosebush still covered with roses, the same as some she had seen at the last halting-place. A few hours ago she would have tried not to see those roses; she would not have spoken of them — least of all to Sir William Thwaite; she would have wished to forget that they were there. But a single morning had brought such a change to the depressing, distracting conditions of her life, that she hailed the flowers. She caused him to gather clusters of them, shared them with him, put some of them as before in her jacket. "Do you remember ever seeing such roses?" she asked him mischievously.

"You are out if you expect to find my memory in fault here," he told her. "It ain't the best of memories, but there are some things I don't forget. I could show you the marrow of these in my pocket-book."

"Then keep them carefully, for they were my single ornament at the rehearsal of the greatest event in our lives."

The girl was laughing and jesting already, girl-like, at the nightmare of the last two or three weeks. And he was a proud and happy man to note the change in her — proud and happy to have her speaking to him in this fashion.

The whole party dined that day for the first time, by Lady Fermor's choice, at the *table d'hôte* of the inn. There were

some inquisitive people present who had seen the titles of two of the party in the visitors' book, and were attracted by the aristocratic old mummy who asserted her importance, and the handsome young couple under her charge. The girl had a head like a cherub, and her companion looked a comely young fellow in the heyday of his life. Clusters of the same rose were in her fichu and in his buttonhole; and the eyes of the wearers had a trick of straying to each other, even in an august presence. It was remarked if my Lady Fermor did not approve of that match, she had brought the pair into a dangerous neighborhood.

The truth was that at the close of Iris's grandmother's afternoon nap, she had heard of the accomplishment of the marriage, for which she had so long planned, schemed, and striven, by fair means and foul, of which that very morning she had received cause to despair. She had got her will; but the question was how far it had lost its charm and become embittered to her by the circumstance that her instrumentality had little or nothing to do with the attainment of her end. She had even been foiled in her last daring, heartless, shameless move; and it was only by their own choice, which they might have exerted any day, that Sir William and Iris were about to marry. Lady Fermor had heard Sir William with little snorts and something not far from a scowl. She had said, "You have plenty of cheek, Thwaite, to come to me with such a proposal after the paper you showed me this morning. You two have taken your own time and mode to make up your minds, and have been rather long about it. What if I decide to have my objections now; to say I am sick — which is a fact — of the tiresome affair, and to forbid the alliance to go any farther?"

But though Lady Fermor had been astoundingly ungracious and unreasonable in eyes which might have read her better by this time, she was a woman of the world. She did not dismiss Sir William; she accepted, however grumblingly, his escort back to England; and she proceeded to announce the marriage, as if it had been from beginning to end of her making.

Before Iris was far across the Border she sent back a letter to Jeannie, the maid at the inn. "I have taken your advice, Jeannie — not because a happy accident has enabled your master, with James Musgrave and Catharine Preston, whoever they may be, to testify to my deliv-

erance from an unknown danger, not because I fear any scandal in the future, but because I now know certainly what I just guessed before, that Sir William Thwaite is one of the best of men, and that I shall be one of the happiest of women if I marry him in sober earnest. I owe it to your kindness to let you know the happy end of the story; and remember, Jeannie, if I can ever serve you in return count upon me. I enclose Sir William's address for this purpose."

Lady Thwaite was profuse and tolerably sincere in her congratulations. "I am glad you have thought better of it, my love. You are a lucky girl; not everybody gets the opportunity of changing her mind to some purpose. I shall be charmed to have you reigning in my place in dear old Whitehills. We will shut our eyes and forget that there was an infatuated, miserable interregnum, with another dreadful Lady Thwaite between. He will only think the more of you, if he should ever look back and contrast the two. I speak as a relation of the family, my dear Iris."

"But you are mistaken, Lady Thwaite," said Iris, with the old involuntary drawing up of her figure and rearing of her little head; "neither Sir William nor I will ever forget poor Honor. There can be no invidious comparison or contrast between us two. We were brought up very differently, yet we were friends, in spite of every obstacle, when we were children and girls. Do you know the last thing she did before she left Whitehills was to come across to Lambford to bid me farewell? I am glad to think of it."

"Oh! Well, just as you like, my dear. You and Sir William are two very remarkable people — about the most remarkable in my circle; and if it please you to recollect what most persons would prefer to forget, it is only a matter of taste; it does not necessarily signify."

Marianne Dugdale first stared, then said, a little drily, "I was led to suppose the *penchant* was all on one side; that is, after I had got the faintest hint of a *penchant*. In short, there have been so many different accounts that, upon my word, one is puzzled which to believe." Then she added, while she struggled between a frown and a smile, "So you two will be married long before we shall." But presently the smile gained the supremacy and grew wondrous sweet, and Marianne cried, "All right!" and kissed Iris with effusion, before the whole company, looking as much affronted the next moment as if

King Lud had been the object of the caress. His congratulations were frank and hearty, the rector and his wife and all the others were complaisant, but Lucy held back a little.

Lucy had been much exercised lately on the subject of her brother's engagement. She had been affectionately impressed by the prize Marianne Dugdale had won. King Lud's virtue from childhood, his unblemished character in every respect, had been the frequent theme of Lucy's laudations. She had dwelt with justice on these lustrous jewels in King Lud's crown, until she felt truly, that for any man to be without them or to have tarnished their lustre was a flaw indeed. Thus the very girl who had given in her early adherence to Iris's accepting the fate assigned to her, and complying with her grandmother's wishes, now sought anxiously to hold the willing bride back, and to remonstrate with her on concluding the contract.

"Yes, darling," said Lucy, hesitating a good deal, "it is delightful to have you settled so near us, after all. It is very pleasant to think that you can bring yourself to do what Lady Fermor has so long wished. But oh! Iris, so many things have happened since we talked of this before. You will not be angry with me for alluding to Sir William's origin, which is the same as it ever was, of course, but then we had not the enlightenment of his low marriage and of his terrible unsteadiness for a time. I would not vex you for the world, Iris, but we are such old friends! Is it not too great a risk? Are you not frightened?"

"No," said Iris, without anger, though with a heightened color; "and I am glad that you have spoken out this once to me, Lucy, for I know you mean it kindly, and I can tell you everything. Love casts out fear, and I love him! I have long loved him. Would you turn from the creature you loved, because he had been subject to some deadly disease, which, in spite of all his brave, desperate struggles to throw it off and regain perfect health, it was just possible might return and prostrate him again? Would you not rather cling to him and help him to meet the enemy? You know there can be no defeat in the end, because the very soul of evil was vanquished long centuries ago; and I have no thought that there will be a partial defeat. Oh, Lucy, think what his trials and disadvantages have been and how he has risen above them, and then measure him, if you dare, with those

who were never really called upon to bear the burden and heat of the day, never thrown and trampled in the mire — down in the place of dragons — or faint with the deadly weakness of ignorance, evil habits, and undisciplined passions."

And he was made a conqueror. Is it so strange a thing to believe that a man who has been once caught in the toils may yet again go free, with God's own heaven above him, a loving, faithful woman by his side, and little children clasping his knees?

Iris's screen, with the working out of the great artist's idea of the contest between Arachne and Minerva, found a place in the Whitehills drawing-room among some relics of poor Honor's finery, tenderly dealt with for her sake. Sir William had an immense admiration for his wife's screen, which the embroideress tried in vain to lower to a reasonable moderation. Rumor darkly whispered that the master of Whitehills preferred that comparatively stilted piece of embroidery — begging the great artist's pardon — not only to all the old tapestry, but to one of the glories of the house, the semblance of his ancestress with the toy rake, designed and executed by the king of English portrait-painters.

Mrs. Haigh and Ju-ju came and saw the screen in its place of honor, and the former on her return to her boarders exalted Lady Thwaite still more than she had exalted "the honorable Miss Comp-ton."

Marianne Dugdale was a great deal with her cousins, even after she had changed her name, before she had a settled home with its nursery, when the least gust of wind at night among the old trees in the park sent her down to breakfast next morning with her temper in a particularly rasping condition. Then she would rail at the Admiralty for parting husbands and wives, and not letting her sail with King Lud, when she would have lent efficient aid in setting every bolt and spar of her Majesty's ship to rights.

Whitehills was a great rendezvous of the Actons, from the rector with his flowery but honest compliments to the youngest of his offspring. Indeed, the place became established in the records of the neighborhood as a most pleasant and hospitable country house, in which the dowager Lady Thwaite was fain to claim a vested interest.

Lady Fermor having established her granddaughter very creditably, behaved as if she had done enough, and concerned her-

self very little with young Lady Thwaite and her doings. The old woman did not grow fonder of the young one, even after Lady Fermor's infirmities increased until she was forced to admit some of Iris's gentle good offices. But to the last Lady Fermor much preferred the attentions of Sir William, to whom she had long ago been entirely reconciled, and any softening of her stout-hearted looks and cynical words was always for him.

So completely were Iris's bugbears dispersed by the genial influence of a good husband and a happy home, that in walking down the main street of Knotley one day, and meeting the wreck of a broken-down old man dragging himself along by the help of a servant's arm and a stick, she crossed over, stopped and inquired kindly for him, listening with commiserating interest to his mumbled complaints. Her first words when she next saw her husband were, "I met poor grandmamma's friend, whom she used to call 'old Pollock,' in Knotley to-day, the first time for many months. I don't think he was ever very likable, but how silly I must have been to feel such a horror of him! and now he looks so wretched, feeble, and friendless, poor man! William, is there nothing we can do for him?"

From The Fortnightly Review.
SAMUEL JOHNSON.

It is exactly one hundred years ago since Dr. Johnson wrote his last letter to Lucy Porter, in which he announced to her that he was very ill, and that he desired her prayers. Less than a fortnight later, on the 13th of December, 1784, he was dead. All through the year his condition had given his friends more than anxiety. The winter of 1783 had been marked by collapse of the constitution; to the ceaseless misery of his skin was now added an asthma that would not suffer him to recline in bed, a dropsy that made his legs and feet useless through half of the weary day. It is somewhat marvellous that he got through this terrible winter, the sufferings of which are painfully recorded in his sad correspondence. It is difficult to understand why, just when he wanted companionship most, his friends seem all to have happened to desert him. Of the quaint group of invalids in mind and body to whom his house had been a hospital, all were gone except Mrs. Desmoulins, who was bedridden;

and we may believe that their wrangling company had never been so distasteful to himself as to his friends. Boswell and Mrs. Thrale, as we know, had more or less valid reasons for absence, and Boswell, at least, was solicitous in inquiry. We must, however, from whatever cause, think of Johnson, who dreaded solitude, as now almost always alone, mortified by spiritual pains no less acute than his physical ones, torturing his wretched nights with Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and with laborious and repeated diagnosis of his own bodily symptoms. It is strange to think that, although he was the leading man of letters in England, and the centre of a whole society, his absence from the meetings of his associates seems scarcely to have been noticed. It was not until in February he was relieved that he allowed himself to speak of the danger he had passed through. Then he confessed his terror to Lucy Porter, in the famous words: "Pray for me; death, my dear, is very dreadful; let us think nothing worth our care but how to prepare for it;" and asked Boswell to consult the venerable physician, Sir Alexander Dick, as to the best way of avoiding a relapse.

Boswell felt it a duty to apply not to Dick only, but to various leading doctors. In doing so he reminded them, with his extraordinary foppishness, of "the elegant compliment" which Johnson had paid to their profession in his "Life of Garth," the poet-physician. The doctors, with one accord, and thinking without doubt far more of Johnson himself than of Garth, clustered around him with their advice and their prescriptions, and the great man certainly received for the brief remainder of his days such alleviation as syrup of poppies and vinegar of squills could give him. Mrs. Boswell, encouraged by a more favorable account of his health, invited him down to Auchinlech in March. He could not venture to accept, but he was pleased to be asked, and recovered so much of his wonted fire as to fancy, in a freak of strange inconsistency, that he would amuse himself by decorating his London study with the heads of "the fathers of *Scottish literature*." To Langton, who — as Johnson justly thought, with unaccountable "circumduction" — had made inquiries about his old friend through Lord Portmore, he expressed a hope of panting on to ninety, and said that "God, who has so wonderfully restored me, can preserve me in all seasons." It is very pathetic to follow the

old man through the desolate and wearisome months; nor can we easily understand, from any of the records we possess, why he was allowed to be so much alone. On Easter Monday, after recording without petulance that his great hope of being able to go out on the preceding day had been doomed to disappointment, he goes on to say: "I want every comfort. My life is very solitary and very cheerless. . . . I am very weak, and have not passed the door since the 13th of December."

Bright weather came in May, and Johnson went to Islington for a change of air. Boswell came back to town, and the sage was able to go to dinner parties day after day, without at first exasperating his symptoms. In June he went to Oxford, on the famous occasion when he told the people in the coach that "Dempster's sister had endeavored to teach him knotting, but that he had made no progress;" and at Oxford, as we know, he talked copiously, and with all his old vivacity. No doubt, though Boswell does not like to confess it, the constant dissipation, intellectual and mildly social, of those two summer months was mischievous to the frail revival of his health. At the dinner of the Literary Club, June 22, every one noticed how ill he looked. Perhaps the true cause of this was a secret chagrin which we can now appreciate, the final apostasy of Mrs. Thrale from his friendship. At all events, Reynolds and Boswell were sufficiently frightened to set their heads together for the purpose of getting their old friend off to Italy. We are divided between satisfaction that the inevitable end did not reach the old man sociable in the midst of strange faces and foreign voices, and bewildered indignation at the still mysterious cabal which wrecked so amiable an enterprise. If Lord Thurlow was shifty, however, other friends were generous. Dr. Brocklesbury, the physician, pressed Johnson to become his guest that he might the more carefully attend upon him. From Ashbourne, whither he had been prevailed upon to go, he kept this last-mentioned friend well posted in the sad fluctuations of his health, and we see him gradually settling down again into wretchedness. His mind recurred constantly to the approaching terror. To Dr. Burney he writes in August, "I struggle hard for life. I take physic and take air; my friend's chariot is always ready. We have run this morning twenty-four miles, and could run forty-eight more. *But who can run the race with death?*" Reflections of this class

fill all his letters of that autumn; and in October he sums up his condition in saying to Heberden that "the summer has passed without giving him any strength." It is strange that still no one seemed to notice what is plain to us in every line of his correspondence, that Johnson was dying. With himself, however, the thought of death was always present; and even in discussing with Miss Seward so frivolous a theme as the antics of a learned pig, Johnson was suddenly solemnized by recollecting that the pig had owed its life to its education. One hardly knows whether to smile or to sigh at the quaint and suggestive peroration: "The pig, then, has no cause to complain; protracted existence is a good recompense for very considerable degrees of torture." To protract existence was now all Johnson's thought, and he set his powerful will to aid him in the struggle. His only hopes were those which his strength of will supplied him with. "I will be conquered," he said, "I will not capitulate."

It was not till he reached London in November that he consented to capitulate. The terror of death was now upon him, indeed. "Love me as well as you can," he wrote to Boswell; "teach the young ones to love me." On the 8th of November he closed the diary of his symptoms — his *agri ephemeris* — now become worse than useless. His suffering, dejection, and restless weakness left his brain, however, unclouded, and less than a week before the end he corrected an error in a line from Juvenal which Dr. Brocklesbury had carelessly recited. The chronicle of the rapid final decline is given with great simplicity and force by Hoole in that narrative of the last three weeks of the life of Dr. Johnson which he contributed to the *European Magazine* in 1799, and which Mr. Napier has reprinted in one of the many appendices to his invaluable edition. At last, exactly a year after his original attack of asthma, the end came at seven o'clock in the evening of Monday, the 13th of December.

Devoid, as it is, of all the elements of external romance, there is perhaps no record of the extinction of genius which attracts more universal interest than this death of Samuel Johnson. So much of frivolity or so much of cant attends most of us even to the tomb, that the frank terror, expressed through a long life by this otherwise most manly and courageous person, has possessed a great fascination for posterity. The haunting insincerity of verse, particularly of eighteenth-century

verse, had extracted even from Johnson, in the pages of "The Vanity of Human Wishes," the usual rose-colored commonplace about death being "kind nature's signal for retreat;" but he completely cleared his own mind of cant, even though a little clung about his singing robes. Boswell has given us an extraordinary instance of his habitual and dismal apprehensions in the celebrated conversation in 1769, which started with a discussion of David Hume's supposed indifference to the idea of death. Not less familiar are the passionate asseverations with which Johnson startled Mrs. Knowles and Miss Seward in 1778 by repeating again and again that to exist in pain is better, far better, than to cease to exist altogether. These and other revelations of Johnson's conversation have perhaps led us to exaggerate his habitual terror. There are, at least, instances to be drawn from less hackneyed sources which display his attitude towards eternity less painfully. Of these perhaps the most remarkable is that recorded in the "Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides," when on a calm Sunday afternoon, sailing from Ramsay to Skye, Johnson delivered himself of a little homily. The text was a passage from "The Cypress Grove" of Drummond of Hawthornden, which Boswell had happened to quote. Drummond had said that a man should leave life as cheerfully as a visitor who has examined an antiquary's cabinet sees the curtain drawn again, and makes way to admit fresh pilgrims to the show. Johnson stripped the conceit to the skin, as he was in the habit of doing: —

Yes, sir, if he is sure he is to be well after he goes out of it. But if he is to grow blind after he goes out of the show-room, and never to see anything again, or if he does not know whither he is to go next, a man will not go cheerfully out of a show-room. No wise man will be contented to die if he thinks he is to go into a state of punishment. Nay, no wise man will be contented to die, if he thinks he is to fall into annihilation, for however unhappy any man's existence may be, he would rather have it than not exist at all. No; there is no rational principle by which a man can die contented, but a trust in the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

The baldness of this statement, the resolute contempt of the author of it for the mere dress and ornament of language, throw not a little light upon the reason why, after the lapse of a hundred years, we still listen with so quick an interest and so personal an affection to all that is recorded of Johnson's speech. The age in which we live cannot be entirely given

up to priggishness and the dry rot of sentiment, so long as any considerable company in it are wont to hang upon Johnson's lips, without being offended by his jocular brutality, his strenuous piety, or his unflinching enmity to affectation. Of course a class still exists, perhaps it never was more numerous than it now is, whose nerves and lungs can endure the strong light and tonic air of Johnson's vigorous genius, and who rejoice to think that no one ever tamed their tiger-cat. To these such an anniversary as the present, not needed to remind them of one who is almost as real to them as any of their own relations, is yet valuable as giving them a landmark from which they may look back and judge the effect that distance has upon the apparent and relative size of such a figure. This can be the only excuse, in a brief note such as this must be, for dealing with facts and personages which are the absolute commonplaces of literary history. We may know our Boswell by heart, and be prepared to pass a searching examination in "Rasselas" and in "The Rambler," and yet be ready to listen for a moment with surprise to the voice which reminds us that a century has passed away since the great pontiff of literature died.

How then does the noble and familiar figure strike us in looking backward from the year 1884? In "constant repercussion from one coxcomb to another," have the sounds which he continued to make through a career of stormy talk ceased to preserve all their value and importance for us? How does he affect our critical vision now that we observe in relief against him such later talker-seers as Coleridge, De Quincey, and Carlyle? To these questions it is temperament more than literary acumen which will suggest the replies; and the present writer has no intention at this particular moment of attempting to forestall the general opinion of the age. His only object in putting forth this brief note is to lay stress on the curious importance of temperament in dealing with what seems like a purely literary difficulty. The personality of all other English writers, in prose and verse, even of Pope, even of De Quincey, must eventually yield in interest to the qualities of their writing. In Dr. Johnson alone the writings yield to the personality, and in spite of the wonder of foreign critics such as M. Taine, he remains, and will remain, although practically unread, one of the most potent of English men of letters.

Must we not admit now, at the close of

a century, that it is practically impossible to read him? Among the lesser men that surrounded him, there are many who have outstripped him in literary vitality. In verse he lags far behind Gray and Collins, Churchill and Chatterton; nay, if the "Wanderer" were by Johnson and "London" by Savage, the former would possess more readers than the latter now attracts. In prose, who shall venture to say that Johnson is the equal of Fielding, Smollett, Hume, Goldsmith, Gibbon, or Burke? We know that he is far less entertaining, far less versatile and brilliant, than any one of these. The "Discourses" of his direct disciple Reynolds are more often read, and with more pleasure, than those essays of "The Rambler" from which their style was taken. As a dramatist, as a novelist, Johnson ranks below "Douglas" Home, below the inventor of "Peter Wilkins." For years he labored upon what was not literature at all, for other years on literature which the world has been obliged, against its will, to allow to disappear. When all is winnowed away which has become, in itself, interesting only to scholars, there remains "The Vanity of Human Wishes," a gnomic poem of tedious morality, singularly feeble in the second joint of almost every recurring distich; "Rasselas," a *conte* in the French taste, insufferable in its lumbering machinery and pedantic ethics; the "Lives of the Poets," in which prejudice, ignorance, and taste combine to irritate the connoisseur and bewilder the student. Such, with obvious exaggeration, and with wilful suppression of exceptional facts, the surviving literary labors of Johnson may be broadly described to be. The paradox is that a Johnsonian may admit all that, and yet hold to it that his hero is the principal Englishman of letters throughout the rich second half of the eighteenth century. In this Johnson is unique. Coleridge, for instance, was much more than a writer of readable works in prose and verse; but let an age arrive in which the "Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and the "Biographia Literaria" are no longer read or admired, and Coleridge will scarcely be able, on the score of his personality alone, to retain his lofty position among men of letters. Yet this is what Johnson promises to succeed in continuing to do. No one will ever say again, with Byron, that the "Lives of the Poets" is "the finest critical work extant," but that does not make Johnson ever so little a less commanding figure to us than he was to Byron.

Let us consider for one moment the case of the unfortunate tragedy of "Irene." There are very few of us who are capable of placing our hands upon our bosoms in the open sight of heaven and swearing that we have ever read it quite through. "The Mourning Bride" still counts its admirers, and even "Cato," but not "Irene." Who among the staunchest and strongest Johnsonians can tell what hero it was that confessed, and upon what occasion,

I thought (forgive me, fair!) the noblest aim,
The strongest effort of a female soul
Was but to choose the graces of the day,

without peeping furtively at the text? Nevertheless "Irene" lives and always will live in the memory of men. But while other dramas exist on the strength of their dramatic qualities, this of Johnson's lives on the personal qualities of the author himself. It is not the blank, blank verse, nor the heroine's reflections regarding the mind of the Divine Being, nor the thrilling Turkish fable, nor the snip-snap dialogue about prodigies between Leontius and Demetrius, that preserves the memory of this tragedy. It is the anecdote of how Walmsley asked, melted by the sorrows of Irene, "How can you possibly contrive to plunge her into deeper calamity?" and how Johnson answered, with a reference to his friend's office, "Sir, I can put her into the spiritual court!" It is the eagerness which George III. expressed to possess the original MS. of the play. It is the monstrous folly which made Cave suppose that the Royal Society would be a likely body to purchase the copyright of it. It is the screams of the audience at Drury Lane when they saw Mrs. Pritchard with the bowstring round her neck. It is the garb in which Johnson insisted on dressing to look on at the performance, in a scarlet waistcoat, and with a gold-laced hat on his head. It is the tragedian's unparalleled frankness about the white silk stockings. These are the things which we recall when "Irene" is mentioned, and if the play had been performed in dumb show, if it had been a ballet, an opera, or a farce, its place in literary history would be just where it is, no higher and no lower. Such is the curious fate which attends all Johnson's works, the most interesting of them is not so interesting as the stories which cluster around its authorship.

This personal interest which we all feel in the sayings and doings of Johnson is founded so firmly on his broad humanity

that we need not have the slightest fear of its cessation or diminution. The habits of thought and expression which were in vogue in the eighteenth century may repeat themselves, as some of us expect, in the twentieth, or our children may become more captious, more violent, more ungraceful in their tastes than we are ourselves. The close of the preface to the "Dictionary" may cease to seem pathetic, or may win more tributes of tears than ever. The reputation of Johnson does not stand or fall by the appetite of modern readers for the "Life of Savage" or even for the "Letter to Lord Chesterfield." It depends on the impossibility of human beings ever ceasing to watch with curiosity "the very pulse of the machine" when it is displayed as Johnson displayed it through the fortunate indiscretions of his friends, and when it is on the whole so manly, wholesome, brave, honest, and tender as it was in his. There will always be readers and admirers of what Johnson wrote. Let us welcome them; but let us not imagine that Johnson, as a great figure in letters, depends upon their suffrages. The mighty Samuel Johnson, the anniversary of whose death both hemispheres of the English-speaking race will solemnize on the thirtieth of this month, is not the author of this or that laborious contribution to prose or verse, but the convulsive invalid who "seesawed" over the Grotius, the courageous old Londoner who trusted his bones among the stormy Hebrides, the autocrat of the Literary Club, the lover of all the company of blue-stockings, the unequalled talker, the sweet and formidable friend, the truculent boon-companion, the childlike Christian, who, for all his ghostly terrors, contrived at last "to die contented, trusting in the mercy of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ." If the completed century finds us with any change at all of our feelings regarding him, it is surely merely this, that the passage of time is steadily making his faults seem more superficial and accidental, and his merits more striking, more essential, more pathetic and pleasing.

EDMUND GOSSE.

From The Contemporary Review.
A FAITHLESS WORLD.

A LITTLE somnolence seems to have overtaken religious controversy of late. We are either weary of it, or have grown so tolerant of our differences that we find

it scarcely worth while to discuss them. By dint of rubbing against each other in the pages of the reviews, in the clubs, and at dinner parties, the sharp angles of our opinions have been smoothed down. Ideas remain in a fluid state in this temperate season of sentiment, and do not, as in old days, crystallize into sects. We have become almost as conciliatory respecting our views as the Chinese whom Huc describes as carrying courtesy so far as to praise the religion of their neighbors and depreciate their own. "You, honored sir," they were wont to say, "are of the noble and lofty religion of Confucius. I am of the poor and insignificant religion of Lao-tze." Only now and then some fierce controversialist, hailing usually from India or the colonies where London amenities seem not yet to have penetrated, startles us by the desperate earnestness wherewith he disproves what we had almost forgotten that anybody seriously believes.

As a result of the general "*laissez croire*" of our day, it has come to pass that a question has been mooted which, to our fathers, would have seemed preposterous: "Is it of any consequence what we believe, or whether we believe anything? Suppose that by-and-by we all arrive at the conclusion that religion has been altogether a mistake, and renounce with one accord the ideas of God and heaven, having (as M. Comte assures us) outgrown the theological stage of human progress; what then? Will it make any serious difference to anybody?"

Hitherto, thinkers of Mr. Bradlaugh's type have sung pæans of welcome for the expected golden years of atheism, when "faiths and empires" will

gleam

Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

Christians and theists of all schools, on the other hand, have naturally deprecated with horror and dread such a cataclysm of faith as sure to prove a veritable Ragnarok of universal ruin. In either case it has been taken for granted that the change from a world of little faith, like that in which we live, to a world wholly destitute of faith, would be immensely great and far-reaching; and that at the downfall of religion not only would the thrones and temples of the earth, but every homestead in every land, be shaken to its foundation. It is certainly a step beyond any yet taken in the direction of scepticism to question this conclusion, and maintain that such a revolution would

be of trivial import, since things would go on with mankind almost as well without a God as with one.

The man who, with characteristic downrightness, has blurted out most openly this last doubt of all — the doubt whether doubt be an evil — is, as my readers will have recognized, Mr. Justice Stephen. In the concluding pages of one of his sledge-hammerings on the heads of his adversaries, in the *Nineteenth Century* for last June, he rung the changes upon the idea (with some reservations, to be presently noted) as follows: —

If human life is in the course of being fully described by science, I do not see what materials there are for any religion, or, indeed, what would be the use of one, or why it is wanted. We can get on very well without one, for though the view of life which science is opening to us gives us nothing to worship, it gives us an infinite number of things to enjoy. . . . The world seems to me a very good world, if it would only last. It is full of pleasant people and curious things, and I think that most men find no great difficulty in turning their minds away from its transient character. Love, friendship, ambition, science, literature, art, politics, commerce, professions, trades, and a thousand other matters, will go equally well, as far as I can see, whether there is, or is not, a God or a future state. (*Nineteenth Century*, No. 88, p. 917.)

Had these noteworthy words been written by an obscure individual, small weight would have attached to them. We might have observed on reading them that the — not wise — person who three thousand years ago "said in his heart, there is no God," had in the interval plucked up courage to say in the magazines that it does not signify whether there be one or not. But the dictum comes to us from a gentleman who happens to be the very antithesis of the object of Solomon's detestation, a man of distinguished ability and unsullied character, of great knowledge of the world (as revealed to successful lawyers), of almost abnormal clear-headedness; and lastly, strangest anomaly of all! who is the representative of a family in which the tenderest and purest type of Protestant piety has long been hereditary. It is the last utterance of the devout "Clapham School," of Venn, Stephen, Hannah More, and Wilberforce, which we hear saying: "I think we could do very well without religion."

As it is a widely received idea just now that the evolution theory is destined to coil about religion till it strangle it, and as it has become the practice with the

scientific party to talk of religion as politicians twenty years ago talked of Turkey, as a sick man destined to a speedy dissolution, it seems every way desirable that we should pay the opinion of Sir James Stephen on this head that careful attention to which, indeed, everything from his pen has a claim. Those amongst us who have held that religion is of priceless value should bring their prepossessions in its favor to the bar of sober judgment, and fairly face this novel view of it as neither precious truth nor yet disastrous error, but as an unimportant matter of opinion which science may be left to settle without anxiety as to the issue. We ought to bring our treasure to assay, and satisfy ourselves once for all whether it be really pure gold or only a fairy substitute for gold, to be transformed some day into a handful of autumn leaves and scattered to the winds.

To estimate the part played by religion in the past history of the human race would be a gigantic undertaking immeasurably above my ambition.* A very much simpler inquiry is that which I propose to pursue: namely, one into the chief consequences which might be anticipated to follow the downfall of such religion, as at present prevails in civilized Europe and America. When these consequences have been, however imperfectly, set in array, we shall be in a position to form some opinion whether we "can do very well without religion." Let me premise:

1. That by the word religion I mean definite faith in a living and righteous God; and, as a corollary therefrom, in the survival of the human soul after death. In other words, I mean by "religion" that nucleus of simple Theism which is common to every form of natural religion, of Christianity and Judaism; and, of course, in a measure also to remoter creeds, which will not be included in the present purview. Further, I do *not* mean Positivism, or Agnosticism, or Buddhism, exoteric or esoteric; or the recognition of the "Unknown and Unknowable," or of a "power not ourselves which makes for righteousness." These may, or may not, be fitly termed "religions;" but it is not the results of their triumph or extinction which we are here concerned to estimate. I

shall even permit myself generally to refer to all such phases of non-belief as involve denial of the dogmas of Theism above-stated as "Atheism;" not from discourtesy, but because it would be impossible at every point to distinguish them, and because, for the purposes of the present argument, they are tantamount to Atheism.

2. That I absolve myself from weighing against the advantages of religion the evils which have followed its manifold corruptions. Those evils, in the case even of the Christian religion, I recognize to have been so great, so hideous, that during their prevalence it might have been plausibly — though even then, I think, not truly — contended that they outbalanced its benefits. But the days of the worst distortions of Christianity have long gone by. The Christianity of our day tends, as it appears to me, more and more to resume the character of the *religion of Christ*, i.e., the religion which Christ believed and lived; and to reject that other and very different religion which men have taught in Christ's name. As this deep and silent but vast change comes over the spirit of the Christianity of modern Europe, it becomes better and better qualified to meet fearlessly the challenge, "Should we do well without religion in its Christian shape?" But it is not my task here to analyze the results of any one type of religion, Christian, Jewish, or simply Theistic; but only to register those of *religion itself*, as I have defined it above, namely, faith in God and in immortality.

I confess, at starting on this inquiry, that the problem "Is religion of use, or can we do as well without it?" seems to me almost as grotesque as the old story of the woman who said that we owe vast obligation to the moon, which affords us light on dark nights, whereas we are under no such debt to the sun, who only shines by day, *when there is always light*. Religion has been to us so diffused a light that it is quite possible to forget how we came by the general illumination, save when now and then it has blazed out with special brightness. On the other hand, all the moon-like things which are proposed to us as substitutes for religion, — friendship, science, art, commerce, and politics, — have a very limited area wherein they shine at all, and leave the darkness around much as they found it. It is the special and unique character of religion to deal with the whole of human nature, *all* our pleasures and pains and duties

* The best summary of the benefits which the Christian religion has historically wrought for mankind is, I think, to be found in that eloquent book "*Gesta Christi*," by the great American philanthropist, Mr. Charles Brace. The author has made no attempt to delineate the shadowy side of the glowing picture, the evils of superstition and persecution wherewith men have marred those benefits.

and affections and hopes and fears, here and hereafter. It offers to the intellect an explanation of the universe (true or false we need not now consider); and, pointing to heaven, it responds to the most eager of its questions. It offers to the conscience a law claiming authority to regulate every act and every word. And it offers to the heart an absolutely love-worthy Being as the object of its adoration. Whether these immense offers of religion are all genuine, or all accepted by us individually, they are quite unmatched by anything which science, or art, or politics, or commerce, or even friendship, has to bestow. The relation of religion to us is not one-sided like theirs, but universal, ubiquitous; not moon-like, appearing at intervals, but sun-like, forming the source, seen or unseen, of all our light and heat, even of the warmth of our household fires. Strong or weak as may be its influence on us as individuals, it is the greatest thing with which we have to do, from the cradle to the grave. And this holds good whether we give ourselves up to it or reject it. It is the one great acceptance, or *il gran rifiuto*. Nothing equally great can come in our way again.

In an estimate of the consequences which would follow a general rejection of religion, we are bound to take into view the two classes of men—those who are devout and those who are not so—who would, of course, be diversely affected by such a revolution of opinion. As regards the first, every one will concede that the loss of so important a factor in their lives would alter those lives radically. As regards the second, after noting the orderly and estimable conduct of many of them, the observer might, *per contra*, not unfairly surmise that they would continue to act just as they do at present were religion universally exploded. But ere such a conclusion could be legitimately drawn from the meritorious lives of non-religious men in the present order of society, we should be allowed (it is a familiar remark) to see the behavior of a whole nation of Atheists. Our contemporaries are no more fair samples of the outcome of Atheism than a little party of English youths who had lived for a few years in central Africa would be samples of negroes. It would take several thousand years to make a full-blooded Atheist out of the scion of forty generations of Christians. Our whole mental constitutions have been built up on food of religious ideas. A man on a mountain-top might as well resolve not to breathe

the ozone in the air, as to live in the intellectual atmosphere of England and inhale no Christianity.

As, then, it is impossible to forecast what would be the consequences of universal Atheism hereafter by observing the conduct of individual Atheists to-day, all that can be done is to study bit by bit the changes which must take place should this planet ever become, as is threatened, a *faithless world*. In pursuing this line of inquiry it will be well to remember that every ill result of loss of faith and hope which we may now observe will be *cumulative* as a larger and yet larger number of persons, and at last the whole community, reject religion altogether. Atheists have been hitherto like children playing at the mouth of a cavern of unknown depth. They have run in and out, and explored it a little way, but always within sight of the daylight outside, where have stood their parents and friends calling on them to return. Not till the way back to the sunshine has been lost will the darkness of that cave be fully revealed.

I shall now register very briefly the more obvious and tangible changes which would follow the downfall of religion in Europe and America, and then devote my available space to a rather closer examination of those which are less manifest; the drying up of those hidden rills which now irrigate the whole subsoil of our civilization.

The first visible change in the faithless world, of course, would be the suppression of public and private worship and of preaching; the secularization or destruction everywhere of cathedrals, churches, and chapels; and the extinction of the clerical profession. A considerable *hiatus* would undoubtedly be thus made in the present order of things. Public worship and preaching, however much weariness of the flesh has proverbially attended them, have, to say the least, done much to calm, to purify, and to elevate the minds of millions; nor does it seem that any multiplication of scientific lectures or penny readings would form a substitute for them. The effacement from each landscape of the towers and spires of the churches would be a somewhat painful symbol of the simultaneous disappearance from human life of heavenly hope and aspiration. The extinction of the ministry of religion, though it would be hailed even now by many as a great reformation, would be found practically, I apprehend, to reduce by many perceptible degrees

the common moral level; and to suppress many highly aimed activities with which we could ill dispense. The severity of the strictures always passed on the faults of clergymen testifies to the general expectation, not wholly disappointed, that they should exhibit a loftier standard of life than other men; and the hortative and philanthropic work accomplished by the forty or fifty thousand ministers of the various sects and Churches in England alone, must form, after all deductions, a sum of beneficence which it would sorely tax any conceivable secular organization to replace in the interests of public morality.

Probably the Seventh Day Rest would survive every other religious institution in virtue of its popularity among the working classes, soon to be everywhere masters of legislation. The failure of the Tenth Day holiday in the first French Revolution would also forestall any further experiments in varying the hebdomadal interval so marvellously adapted to our mental and physical constitution. As, however, all religious meaning of the day would be lost, and all church-going stopped, nothing would hinder the employment of its hours from morning to night as Easter Monday and Whit Monday are now employed by the millions in our great cities. The nation would, therefore, enjoy the somewhat doubtful privilege of keeping fifty-six bank holidays instead of four in the year. Judicial and official oaths of all sorts, and marriage and burial rites, would, of course, be entirely abolished. A gentleman pronouncing the *oraison funèbre* outside the crematorium would replace the old white-robed parson telling the mourners,

beneath the churchyard tree,
In solemn tones, and yet not sad,
Of what man is, what man shall be.

Another change more important than any of these, in Protestant countries, would be the reduction of the Bible to the rank of an historical and literary curiosity. Nothing (as we all recognize) but the supreme religious importance attached to the Hebrew Scriptures could have forced any book into the unique position which the Bible has now held for three centuries in English and Scottish education. Even that held by the Koran throughout Islam is far less remarkable, inasmuch as the latter (immeasurably inferior though it be) is the supreme work of the national literature, whereas we have adopted the literature of an alien race. All the golden fruit which the English intellect has

borne from Shakespeare downwards may be said to have grown on this priceless Semitic graft upon the Aryan stem.

But as nothing but its religious interest, over and above its historical and poetical value, could have given the Bible its present place amongst us, so the rejection of religion must quickly lower its popularity by a hundred degrees. Notwithstanding anything which the Matthew Arnolds of the future may plead on behalf of its glorious poetry and mines of wisdom, the youth of the future faithless world will spare very little time from their scientific studies to read a book brimming over with religious sentiments which to them will be nauseous. Could everything else remain unchanged after the extinction of religion in England, it seems to me that the unravelling of this Syrian thread from the very tissue of our minds will altogether alter their texture.

Whether the above obvious and tangible results of a general relinquishment of religion would all be *disadvantageous* may, possibly, be an open question. That they would be *trifling*, and that things would go on much as they have done after they had taken place, seems to me, I confess, altogether incredible.

I now turn to those less obvious consequences of the expected downfall of religion which would take place silently.

The first of these would be the *belittling* of life. Religion has been to us hitherto (to rank it at its lowest), like a great mountain in a beautiful land. When the clouds descend and hide the mountain, the grandeur of the scene is gone. A stranger entering that land at such a time will commend the sweetness of the vales and woods; but those who know it best will say, "Ichabod! — The glory has departed." To do justice to the eminent man whose opinion concerning the practical unimportance of religion I am endeavoring to combat, he has seen clearly and frankly avowed this ennobling influence of religion, and, as a corollary, would, I presume, admit the *minifying* consequences of its general abandonment.* If the window which religion opens out on the infi-

* He says: "The leading doctrines of theology are noble and glorious;" and he acknowledges that people who were able to accept them are "ennobled by their creed." They are "carried above and beyond the petty side of life; and if the virtue of propositions depended, not upon the evidence by which they may be supported, but their intrinsic beauty and utility, they might vindicate their creed against all others" (p. 917). To some of us the notion of "noble and glorious" *fictions* is difficult to accept. The highest thought of our poor minds, whatever it be, has surely as such some presumption in favor of its truth.

nite expanse of God and Heaven, immeasurably enlarges and lightens our abode of clay, the walling of it up cannot fail to narrow and darken it beyond all telling. Human nature, ever pulled two ways by downward and by aspiring tendencies, cannot afford to lose all the aid which religious ideas offer to its upward flight. Only when they disappear will men perceive how the two thoughts — of this world as *God's world*, and of ourselves as immortal beings, — have, between them, lighted up in rainbow hues the dull plains of earth. When they fade away, all things, nature, art, duty, love, and death, will seem to grow grey and cold. Everything which casts a glamor over life will be gone.

Even from the point of view of art (of which in these days perhaps too much is made), life will lose *poetry* if it lose religion. Nothing ever stirs our sympathies like it, or like a glimpse into the inner self of our brother man, as affected by repentance, hope, and prayer. The great genius of George Eliot revealed this to her; and, Agnostic as she was, she rarely failed to strike this resonant string of human nature, as in "Adam Bede," "Silas Marner," and "Janet's Repentance." French novelists who have no knowledge of it, and who describe the death of a man as they might do that of an ox, while they galvanize our imaginations, rarely touch the outer hem of our sympathies. Religion in its old anthropomorphic forms was the great inspirer of sculpture, painting, poetry, science, and almost the creator of architecture. Phidias, Dante, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Milton, Handel, and the builders of the Egyptian temples and mediæval cathedrals, were all filled with the religious spirit, nor can we imagine what they would have been without it. In the purer modern types of religion, while music and architecture would still remain in its direct service, we should expect painting and sculpture to be less immediately concerned with it than in old days, because unable to touch such purely spiritual ideas. But the elevation, aspiration, and reverence which have their root in religion must continue to inspire those arts likewise, or they will fall into triviality on one side (as there seems danger in England), or into obscene materialism on the other, as is already annually exemplified on the walls of the Paris *Salon*.

Again, it will not merely belittle life, it will *carnalize* it to take religion out of it. The lump without the heaven will be grosser and heavier than we have dreamed.

Civilization, as we all know, bore under imperial Rome, and may assume again any day, the hateful type in which luxury and cruelty, art and sensuality, go hand in hand. That it ever changed its character and has come to mean with us refinement, self-restraint, chivalry, and freedom from the coarser vices, is surely due to the fact that it has grown up *pari passu* with Christianity. In truth it needs no argument to prove that, as the bestial tendencies in us have scarcely been kept down while we believed ourselves to be immortal souls, they will have it still more their own way when we feel assured we are only mortal bodies.

And the life thus belittled and carnalized will be a more cowardly life than men have been wont to lead while they had a Providence over them and a heaven waiting for them. Already, I fear, we may see some signs of this new poltroonery of reflective prudence, which holds that death is the greatest of all evils, and disease the next greatest; and teaches men to prefer a "whole skin" to honor and patriotism, and health to duty. Writing of this hygeiolatry elsewhere, I have remarked that it has almost come to be accepted as a canon of morals that any practice which, in the opinion of experts, conduces to bodily health, or tends to the cure of disease, becomes *ipso facto* lawful; and that there are signs apparent that this principle is bearing fruit, and that men and women are beginning to be systematically selfish and self-indulgent where their health is concerned, in modes not hitherto witnessed. In public life it is notorious that whenever a bill comes before Parliament concerning itself with sanitary matters there is exhibited by many of the speakers, and by the journalists who discuss it, a readiness to trample on personal and parental rights in a way forming a new feature in English legislation, and well deserving of the rebuke it has received from Mr. Herbert Spencer. As to military courage, I fear it will also wane amongst us, as it seemed to have waned among the French Atheistic soldiery at Metz and Sedan. Great as are the evils of war, those of a peace only maintained by the nations because it had become no longer possible to raise troops who would stand fire, would be immeasurably worse.

From the general results on the community, I now pass to consider those on the life of the individual which may be expected to follow the collapse of religion.

Mr. Mallock, in his "New Republic,"

made the original and droll remark that even vice would lose much of its savor were there no longer any morality against which it might sin. As morality will probably not expire — though its vigor must be considerably reduced — by the demise of its Siamese twin, religion, it would seem that vice need not fear, even in such a contingency, the entire loss of the pleasures of disobedience. Nevertheless (to speak seriously), it is pretty certain that the temperature of all moral sentiments will fall so considerably when the sun of religion ceases to warm them that not a few will perish of cold. The faithless world will pass through a moral glacial period, wherein much of our present fauna and flora will disappear. What, for example, can become, in that frigid epoch of godlessness, of *aspiration*, the sacred passion, the *ambition sainte* to become perfect and holy, which has stirred at one time or other in the breast of every son of God; the longing to attain the crowning heights of truth, goodness, and purity? This is surely not a sentiment which can live without faith in a divine perfection, existing somewhere in the universe, and an immortal life wherein the infinite progress may be carried on. Even the man whose opinions on the general unimportance of religion I am venturing to question in these pages, admits frankly enough that it is not the heroic or saintly character which will be cultivated after the extinction of faith. Among the changes which he anticipates, one will be that "the respectable man of the world, the *lukewarm*, *nominal Christian*, who believed as much of his creed as happened to suit him, and *led an easy life*, will turn out to have been right after all." Precisely so. The *easy life* will be the ideal life in the faithless world; and the life of aspiration, the life which is a prayer, will be lived no more. And the "lukewarm" men of the world, in their "easy lives," will be all the easier and more lukewarm for leading them thenceforth unrebuked by any higher example.

Again, repentance as well as aspiration will disappear under the snows of Atheism. I have written before on this subject in this review,* and will now briefly say that Mr. Darwin's almost ludicrously false definition of repentance is an illustration of the inability of the modern scientific mind to comprehend spiritual phenomena; much less to be the subject of

them. In his "Descent of Man," this great thinker and most amiable man describes repentance as a natural return, after the satisfaction of selfish passions, to "the instinct of sympathy and goodwill to his fellows which is still present and ever in some degree active" in a man's mind. . . . "And then, a sense of dissatisfaction will inevitably be felt" (Descent of Man, p. 90). Thus even on the showing of the great philosopher of evolution himself, repentance (or rather the "dissatisfaction" he confounds with that awful convulsion of the soul) is only to be looked for under the very exceptional circumstances of men in whom the "instinct of sympathy and goodwill to their fellows" is ever present, and moreover *reasserts itself after they have injured them* — in flat opposition to ordinary human experience as noted by Tacitus, *Humani generis proprium est odisse quem laeseris*.

The results of the real spiritual phenomenon of repentance (not Mr. Darwin's child's play) are so profound and far-reaching that it cannot but happen that striking them out of human experience will leave life more shallow. No soul will survive with the deeper and riper character which comes out of that ordeal. As Hawthorne illustrated it in his exquisite parable of "Transformation," men, till they become conscious of sin, are morally little more than animals. Out of hearts ploughed by contrition spring flowers fairer than ever grow on the hard ground of unbroken self content. There bloom in them sympathy and charity for other erring mortals; and patience under suffering which is acknowledged to be merited; and lastly, sweetest blossom of all! tender gratitude for earthly and heavenly blessings felt to be free gifts of divine love. Not a little, perhaps, of the prevalent disease of pessimism is owing to the fact that these flowers of charity, patience, and thankfulness are becoming more and more rare as cultivated men cease to feel what old theologians used to call "the exceeding sinfulness of sin;" or to pass through any vivid experiences of penitence and restoration. As a necessary consequence they never see the true proportions of good and evil, joy and grief, sin and retribution. They weigh jealously human pain; they never place human guilt in the opposite scale. There is little chance that any man will ever feel how sinful is sin, who has not seen it in the white light of the holiness of God.

The abrogation of public worship was

* Agnostic Morality, *Contemporary Review*, June, 1883.

mentioned above as one of the visible consequences of the general rejection of religion. To it must here be added a still direr and deeper loss, that of the use of private prayer — whether for spiritual or other good, either on behalf of ourselves or of others; all confession, all thanksgiving, in one word all effort at communion of the finite spirit with the Infinite. This is not the place in which this subject can be treated as it would require to be were the full consequences of such a cessation of the highest function of our nature to be defined. It may be enough now to say that the Positivists in their fantastic device of addresses to the *grand être* of humanity as a substitute for real prayer to the living God, have themselves testified to the smaller — the subjective — part of the value of the practice. Alas for our poor human race if ever the day should arrive when to him who now "heareth prayer," flesh shall no longer come!

With aspiration, repentance, and prayer renounced and forgotten, and the inner life made as "easy" as the outward, we may next inquire whether in the faithless world the relations between man and man will either remain what they have been, improve, or deteriorate? I have heard a secularist lecturer argue that the love of God has been a great hindrance to the love of man; and I believe it is the universal opinion of Agnostics and Comtists that the "enthusiasm of humanity" will flourish and form the crowning glory of the future after religion is dead. It is obvious, indeed, that the social virtues are rapidly eclipsing in public opinion those which are personal and religious; and if philanthropy is not to be enthroned in the "faithless world," there is no chance for veracity, piety, or purity.

But, not to go over ground which I have traversed already in this review, it will be enough now to remark that Mr. Justice Stephen, with his usual perspicacity, has found out that there is here a "rift within the lute," and frankly tells us that we must not expect to see Christian charity after the departure of Christianity. He thinks that temperance, fortitude, benevolence, and justice will always be honored and rewarded, but —

"If a purely human morality takes the place of Christian morals, self-command and self-denial, force of character shown in postponing the present to the future (*gy.*, selfish prudence?) will take the place of self-sacrifice as an object of admiration. Love, friendship, good-nature, kindness, carried to the height of sincere and devoted affection will always be the chief

pleasures of life, whether Christianity is true or false; but Christian charity is not the same as any of these or of all of them put together, and I think, if Christian theology were exploded, Christian charity would not survive it.

Even if the same sentiment of charity were kept alive in a faithless world, I do not think its ministrations would be continued on the same lines as hitherto. The more kind-hearted an Atheist may be (and many have the kindest of hearts) the less, I fancy, he could endure to go about as a comforter among the wretched and dying, bringing with him only such cold consolation as may be afforded by the doctrine of the "survival of the fittest." Every one who has tried to lighten the sorrows of this sad world, or to reclaim the criminal and the vicious, knows how immense is the advantage of being able to speak of God's love and pity, and of a life where the bereaved shall be reunited to their beloved ones. It would break, I should think, a compassionate atheist's heart to go from one to another deathbed in cottage or workhouse or hospital, meet the yearning looks of the dying, and watch the anguish of wife or husband or mother, and be unable honestly to say: "This is not the end. There is Heaven in store." But Mr. Justice Stephen speaks, I apprehend, of another reason than this why Christian charity must not be expected to survive Christianity. The truth is (though he does not say it) that the charity of science is not merely *different* from the charity of religion; it is an *opposite* thing altogether. Its softest word is *Vae victis!* Christianity (and like it I should hope every possible form of future religion) says: "The strong ought to bear the burdens of the weak. Blessed are the merciful, the unselfish, the tender-hearted, the humble-minded." Science says: "The supreme law of Nature is the survival of the fittest; and that law, applied to human morals, means the remorseless crushing down of the unfit. The strong and the gifted shall inherit the earth, and the weak and simple go to the wall. Blessed are the merciless, for they shall obtain useful knowledge. Blessed are the self-asserting, for theirs is the kingdom of this world, and there is no world after it."

These morals of evolution are beginning gradually to make their way, and to be stated (of course in veiled and modest language) frequently by those priests of science, the physiologists. Should they ever obtain general acceptance, and Darwinian morality take the place of the Sermon on the Mount, the old *droit du plus*

fort of barbarous ages will be revived with more deliberate oppression, and the last state of our civilization will be worse than the first.

Behind all these changes of public and general concern, lies the deepest change of all for each man's own heart. We are told that in a faithless world we may interest ourselves in friendship, and politics, and commerce, and literature, science, and art, and that "a man who cannot occupy every waking moment of a long life with some or other of these things must be either very unfortunate in regard to his health, or circumstances, or else must be a poor creature."

But it is not necessary to be either unfortunate oneself or a very "poor creature" to feel that the wrongs and agonies of this world of pain are absolutely intolerable unless we can be assured that they will be righted hereafter; that "there is a God who judgeth the earth," and that all the oppressed and miserable of our race, aye, and even the tortured brutes are beheld by him. It is, I think, on the contrary, to be a "poor creature" to be able to satisfy the hunger of the soul after justice, the yearning of the heart for mercy, with such pursuits as money-getting, and scientific research, and the writing of clever books, and painting of pretty pictures. Not that which is "poorest" in us, but that which is richest and noblest, refuses to "occupy every moment of a long life" with our own ambitions and amusements, or to shut out deliberately from our minds the "riddle of the painful earth." A curse would be on us in our "lordly pleasure-house" were we to do it.

Even if it be possible to enjoy our own good fortune regardless of the woes of others, is it not rather a pitiful wreck and remnant of merely selfish happiness which it is proposed to leave to us? "The world," we are told, "is full of pleasant people and curious things," and "most men find no difficulty in turning their minds away from its transient character." Even our enjoyment of "pleasant people and curious things" must be held, then, on the condition of reducing ourselves — philosophers that we are, or shall be — to the humble level of the hares and rabbits!

Regardless of their doom the little victims play.

Surely the happiness of any creature, deserving to be called rational, depends on the circumstance whether he can look on good as "the final goal of ill," or believe ill to be the final goal of any good he

has obtained or hopes for; whether he walk on a firm, even if it be a thorny road, or tread on thin, albeit glittering ice, destined ere long to break beneath his feet? The faith that there is an ORDER tending everywhere to good, and that JUSTICE sooner or later will be done to all, — this, almost universal, faith to which the whole literature of the world bears testimony, seems to me no less indispensable for our selfish happiness than it is for any unselfish satisfaction in the aspect of human life at large. If it be finally balked, and we are compelled to relinquish it forever at the bidding of science, existence alike on our own account and that of others will become unendurable.

In all I have said hitherto, I have confined myself to discussing the probable results of the downfall of religion on men in general, and have not attempted to define what they would be to those who have been fervently religious; and who we must suppose (on the hypothesis of such a revolution) to be forcibly driven by scientific arguments out of their faith in God and the life to come. To such persons (and there are, alas! many already who think they have been so driven, and to whom the sad result is therefore the same) the loss must needs be like that of the darkening of the sun. Of all human sorrows the bitterest is to discover that we have misplaced our love; labored and suffered in vain; thrown away our heart's devotion. All this, and much more, must it be to *lose God*. Among those who have endured it, there are, of course, as we all know, many who have reconciled themselves to the loss, and some tell us they are the happier. Yet, I think to the very last hour of life there must remain in every heart which has once *loved God* (not merely believed in or feared him) an infinite regret if it can love him no more; and the universe, were it crowded with a million friends, must seem empty when that Friend is gone.

As to human love and friendship, to which we are often bidden to turn as the best substitutes for religion, I feel persuaded that, above all other things, they must deteriorate in a faithless world. To apples of Sodom must all their sweetness turn, from the hour in which men recognize their transitory nature. The warmer and more tender and reverential the affection, the more intolerable must become the idea of eternal separation; and the more beautiful and admirable the character of our friend, the more maddening the belief that in a few years, or days,

he will vanish into nothingness. Sooner than endure the agony of these thoughts, I feel sure that men will check themselves from entering into the purer and holier relations of the heart. Affection, predestined to be cast adrift, will throw out no more anchors, but will float on every wave of passion or caprice. The day in which it becomes impossible for men to vow that they will love *forever* will almost be the last in which they will love nobly and purely at all.

But if these things hold good as regard the prosperous and healthy, and those still in the noon of life, what is to be said of the prospects in the faithless world, of the diseased, the poverty-stricken, the bereaved, the aged? There is no need to strain our eyes to look into the dark corners of the earth. We all know (though while we ourselves stand in the sunshine we do not often *feel*) what hundreds of thousands of our fellow-mortals are enduring at all times, in the way of bodily and mental anguish. When these overtake us, or when old age creeps on, and

First our pleasures die, and then
Our hopes, and then our fears,

is it possible to suppose it will make "little difference" what we believe as to the existence of some loving Power in whose arms our feebleness may find support; or of another life wherein our winter may be turned once more to spring? If we live long enough, the day must come to each of us when we shall find our chief interest in our daily newspaper most often in the obituary columns, till, one after another nearly all the friends of our youth and prime have "gone over to the majority," and we begin to live in a world peopled with spectres. Our talk with those who travel still beside us is continually referring to the dead, and our very jests end in a sigh for the sweet old laughter which we shall never hear again. If in these solemn years we yet have faith in God and immortality, and as we recall one dear one after another, — father, mother, brother, friend, — we can say to ourselves, "They are all gone into the world of light; they are all safe and rejoicing in the smile of God;" then our grief is only mourning; it is not despair. Our sad hearts are cheered and softened, not turned to stone by the memories of the dead. Let us, however, on the other hand, be driven by our new guide, science, to abandon this faith and the hope of eternal reunion, then, indeed, must our old age be utterly, utterly desolate. O, the mockery of say-

ing that it would make "no great difference!"

We have been told that in the event of the fall of religion, "life would remain in most particulars and to most people much what it is at present." It appears to me, on the contrary, that there is actually *nothing* in life which would be left unchanged after such a catastrophe.

But I have only conjured up the nightmare of a faithless world. GOD LIVES; and in his light we shall see light.

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

From The Saturday Review.

MR. FAWCETT AND THE BLIND.

It is proposed to create a fund in memory of the late Mr. Fawcett, to further the higher education of the blind. No memorial could be more appropriate, or could be more in accordance with the wishes of the lamented statesman whose name the fund will bear. It is one of the compensations of misfortune that, when manfully met, the good results of the example on others outweigh, even in the feelings of the sufferer himself, his own personal loss. During the lifetime of Professor Fawcett he had constant evidence that his example was of use as much even to those who had the gift of sight as to those who had lost it. Few of those who were in the habit of meeting Professor Fawcett have failed to be invigorated by the cheerful courage with which he met the painful problem of his life; and to many of the blind scattered far and wide over the world his name has been ever since it was known to them a perpetual source of encouragement. His example showed what force of will and a pure ambition could do to overcome the gravest natural obstacles. What a strong and gifted man may do for himself, however, has to be taught to others less self-helpful. Both in the higher and in the elementary teaching of the blind there remains abundant room for progress. In certain institutions it may be said to be as good as it can be made to be; but in too many the intelligent method is lacking. The difference is at once evident to any visitor who compares one blind asylum with another. The contrast between the spiritless and half-helpless inmates of the one with the active and cheerful members of the other — many of whom the visitor has a difficulty at first in believing to be blind at

all—is an unmistakable proof of what systematic teaching can effect in overcoming natural deficiencies and in turning an unfortunate into a happy lot.

The main point in the educating process is to make the blind self-dependent. It is marvellous to what an extent this can be done. Without the help of any such systematic instruction as can be put at the service of the blind in organized institutions, Mr. Fawcett was able to do a good deal more than most men with eyes are able to accomplish. To say nothing of his public work, which is before all the world, he was able to ride, to walk, to skate, to row, to fish, and to climb the Alps. His case was that of a large proportion of the blind—namely, those who have once been able to see, and have afterwards lost the power. To them the affliction is perhaps greater than to those who never have known what sight is, and the calamity is in one respect the more difficult to meet, because the habits of a man who has once had the use of his eyes are already formed like those of his fellows. There is a deftness in the case of those born blind which can rarely be acquired by those to whom blindness comes later. Yet we imagine that the blind who have once seen are happier than those who have not. The faculty of sight lost, but once possessed, can be partly made good by the words of others. The late Professor Fawcett in his walks with friends would sometimes wish to go to a place from which he could have “a view”—that is, where the companions with him could describe to him scenes once familiar to his sight—and more than one of those who have met him have been struck on being told by the professor (as a result of friendly inquiries from third parties as to their appearance) that he was glad to see them looking so well. The memory of what has once been seen thus comes in to aid the comprehension of those who have lost their sight, and most likely compensates on the whole for the superior dexterity which those born blind gradually and instinctively acquire. And, as far as the mental happiness of the individual is concerned, it is certainly better to have a store of pleasant memories, which is daily revived by the conversation of friends, than to have been without the power of sight altogether.

It is not yet stated what form the proposed Memorial Fund will definitely take. The first thing that will occur to most readers' minds is that the sum collected could not be better employed than in extending the system (whether in connection with the institution or not) which has been carried out with admirable results at the Royal Normal College for the blind at Upper Norwood. Dr. Campbell, the head of the college, is himself, like Professor Fawcett, an instance of what may be done by energy and intelligence in making up for the loss of sight. The college was brought prominently before the world in a speech which Mr. Bright made on its behalf some months ago; but was already well known to those interested in works of practical benevolence. Dr. Campbell's aim has been to systematize and teach what he and Mr. Fawcett did for themselves—that is, first of all, to make the blind feel independent; and then, after giving them the sense of independence, as the foundation of all that is to follow, to train them to the particular sort of work for which their capacities or past education have fitted them. But the foundation is self-help, and as Dr. Campbell has spared no pains to impress on the public, the first and most important part of the education of the blind consists in teaching them to feel and act as if they were not blind. When the sense of disablement is removed all the rest is comparatively easy. If a man is brought to feel that the mere fact of his blindness does not make him a burden on others, and does not interfere seriously with his success in life, he can set to work with some heart and hope. And to teach this is the main object of the Norwood College, and should be the main object of any such fund, however applied, raised to perpetuate the memory of Mr. Fawcett.

It is only in very recent times that the subject has been dealt with at all methodically. The old idea, even among those who took most interest in the blind, was that they were objects of sympathy and deserving of help, but not that they could be, as a rule, trained to be self-supporting and productive members of society. Blind asylums were, when they existed, hospitals for incurables, and not, as they should be, schools in which the pupils are taught to be as efficient in life as those who can see. One of the earliest, if not the earliest, of such asylums was the Hospital of the Quinze-Vingts, founded in Paris in the fourteenth century by St. Louis. The reason of its foundation is said to have been the frequent occurrence of blindness among the French soldiers warring in his reign in Africa. After the national conflict carried on by Prussia against the first Napoleon, a number of

asylums for the blind were organized in Germany, in order to help those who had lost their sight in these wars. Some of the institutions then founded still exist. Many instances are on record of the individual effort on the part either of the blind themselves or of their instructors to meet the real difficulties of the case. Bernouilli, more than two hundred years ago, is reported to have taught a blind girl at Geneva how to write; and both Saunderson and Weissenburg did the same for themselves, each devising the means most suitable for his own case. Exactly a hundred years ago, in 1784, an attempt, which has been fruitful of many beneficent consequences, was made in Paris to further develop the same idea. Fräulein Paradis, of Vienna, who had been equally successful in devising her own method of self-help for the blind, came into communication with persons interested in the same subject in France; and the result was the founding of an institution in which, besides the first essentials of knowledge, and the subjects (such as music) for which the blind are supposed to have a special capacity, a general education was proposed. During the last century a main difficulty of training the blind is that a true theory of education comes into conflict with the charitable but unintelligent instincts of mankind. There are large numbers of people who would put down money for supporting the blind, but whose sympathies are not equally awakened by a project for teaching the blind to help themselves. The old notion still prevails, in spite of all proof to the contrary, that to give at once to the poor blind beggar in the street is a better thing than to subscribe to a fund or an institution the object of which is to prevent the poor blind man from ever coming into the street at all as a beggar. If it could be generally impressed on the public what the facts of the case are, a change for the better might be expected. The suggestion of a higher and systematic education of the blind has already called forth appeals on behalf of the general elementary education of the same class. Both rest upon the same principle. The training of the deaf and dumb comes also within the same category. When we see the marvels that can be produced in the education of those who can neither see nor hear nor (till they are carefully taught) speak, we can but have the highest hopes of any well-conducted institution or system which aims at making good the defects which nature or accident has imposed on our fellow-crea-

tures. The example of Mr. Fawcett will recur to everybody's thoughts in connection with this subject.

From All The Year Round.

AN INLAND SEA FOR AFRICA.

LAND and water, astronomers say, are much better distributed in our outside neighboring planet, Mars, than on our own native sphere, Terra. Although their land-surface is a trifle in excess of their seas, the Martians have the wet and the dry, the fat and lean of their globe, like first-rate bacon, so pleasantly and fairly interlarded, that they would not believe either in our oceans or in Asiatic and African deserts, unless they saw them with their own eyes, of course through extra-powerful telescopes.

Instead of islands here and there, emerging with a struggle above the waters, their continents seem rather to reduce their oceans to the condition of inland seas — veritable Mediterraneans. They need no Columbus to discover their America, for, having neither an Atlantic nor a Pacific, they might almost walk dryshod round their little world, whose seas are cut up into long-drawn gulfs, like our own Red Sea or Adriatic. Of their supposed canals, not less than one hundred miles broad, all we can say at present is, that if they really are the results of manual labor, they beat Ferdinand de Lesseps and all his works — and all his projects too — hollow.

We Terrestrials, on the contrary, with three times as much water as land, have not always the water where we want it. True, Europe itself is so environed by seas that it may almost be considered as an overgrown peninsula, while its numerous inland lakes, small and great, must have a beneficial effect on its climate. The same may be said, to a certain extent, of the much vaster area of North America. But take the great Asiatic continent. Would it not be an excellent thing if we could cut out a good piece of its sterile centre — which might be utilized as an island somewhere off its south coast — and fill up the hole with water, salt or fresh? This is what it is proposed to do for north Africa — except that the hole is ready made, and only requires filling.

The matter would be made clearer if the reader had before him a good map of Algeria and Tunis, on the east coast of

which latter province he will note a large bay called the Gulf of Kabes, or Gabes, and westwards, in Algeria, the province of Constantine.

Now, south of the provinces of Constantine and Tunis, there exist vast depressions in the soil which extend from the meridian of Biskra to the Gulf of Gabes — namely, about two hundred and fifty English miles. The bottom of these depressions — called by the natives *chotts* — is occupied by surfaces which have been levelled by the action of water, and are now covered with a crust of crystallized salt of various thickness.

There are three principal chotts; the chott Melrir, the chott Rharsa, and the chott Djerid, which last is the nearest to the Gulf of Gabes. A most important fact is that the altitude of these is at present known with great precision. From 1873 to 1883, one thousand seven hundred and twenty kilomètres (one thousand and seventy-five miles) of geometrical levellings have been executed, in sections of from something more than one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards each.

The level of the sea at low water in the Gulf of Gabes was taken at the point of departure for the surveys, whose absolute exactitude has been admitted by the Académie des Sciences. If any doubts about the question were still entertained, they would be dispelled by the survey recently made for a line of railway from Biskra to Touggourt. The level of the Mediterranean at Philippeville was taken as the starting-point for the levels obtained on that occasion. On reaching Mraïer, on the western end of the chott Melrir, the level was found to coincide, within a very few inches, with that resulting from taking the Gulf of Gabes as the starting-point.

Two out of the three above-mentioned chotts, namely, Melrir and Rharsa, are below the level of the sea. If therefore they were put in communication with the Gulf of Gabes by means of a sufficiently broad canal, its waters would rush in and form an inland sea whose level would be practically the same as that of the Mediterranean. The new sea resulting from inundating these two chotts would have a total surface of eight thousand two hundred square kilomètres, or from fourteen to fifteen times the size of the Lake of Geneva, which covers only five hundred and seventy-seven square kilomètres. And as the bottom of the chotts is flat and horizontal, the inland sea would have nearly the same depth throughout its ex-

tent, namely, an average depth of water of twenty-four metres, or seventy-eight English feet and a fraction.

Were this herculean project once executed, there is little doubt that not a few consequences would ensue from it which at present are unexpected and unforeseen. But there are also not a few desirable results which may very fairly be reckoned upon. For instance, the chotts, in their actual condition, are no better than muddy, saline, swampy hollows, which, at certain times of the year, under an African sun, become centres of every form of marsh disease. Thus, in the northern part of the chott Melrir, the streams known as the Oued Djeddi and the Oued el Arab widen into broad deltas and spread their waters over the swamps called Farfaria, covering a surface of about one thousand square kilomètres. This vast region, inaccessible in winter, overgrown with reeds and rushes, becomes partially dried in summer, and is thereby converted into a source of pestilence. As soon as the month of March arrives, the natives avoid its neighborhood.

The chotts Melrir and Rharsa are the receptacles of the waters of an immense basin which, by the valley of the Igharghar, reaches as far as the Djebel Hoggar, situated nearly one thousand kilomètres to the south, and by the valley of the Oued Djeddi, to the Djebel Amour, four hundred kilomètres to the west. What possibility is there of draining these fenny depressions? How can the waters that run into them be got rid of, either superficially or underground? If they were above the level of the sea, the problem would be capable of solution; but in consequence of their inferior altitude, they must remain forever in the state of pestiferous bogs, unless they can be again covered with a deep stratum of water; that is, unless they can be restored to the previous condition which has been changed by some natural accident; in fact, unless they can become once more an inland arm or gulf of the Mediterranean.

The chott Djerid, like the chotts Melrir and Rharsa, is a depression enclosed by higher ground in all directions, and continually kept in a muddy state by a considerable mass of stagnant water. But this chott, being above the level of the sea, can easily be drained and made wholesome to dwell in. All that is needed, is to put it in communication either with the Mediterranean or with the chott Rharsa, by opening one or two efficient cuttings or

trenches. The stagnant water will thus be carried away; the soil will rapidly be drained and dried; the salt which saturates it will be gradually washed out; and the grounds of the chott Djerid, which consist of exceedingly fertile mud, will not only cease to be dangerously unhealthy but, after thorough drainage, will be all that the cultivator can desire. Visions of cotton, sugarcane, and other valuable tropical crops, will at once present themselves as future probabilities. And historical facts confirm those expectations. In the time of the Romans, when the chotts were full of water, Tunis and the south of Algeria were incomparably more fertile than at present. The sterility of the adjoining regions has been the consequence of the drying up of the chotts.

If, therefore, contrary to first expectations, the chott Djerid cannot be inundated—if the surface of the inland sea will be less extensive than had been hoped—still, the completion of the project will result in restoring to cultivation one million two hundred and thirty-five thousand acres of excellent earth, which at present is in such a permanently swampy condition that it is impossible to venture upon it without danger. An additional important circumstance is that the sea water, once introduced into the basin of the chotts, will exert so considerable a pressure on the bottom of those immense cavities, that the fresh water, which now oozes into them, will be stemmed and driven back, and will consequently increase the yield, and even the number, of the wells and springs which give fertility to the neighboring oases.

The engineering details of this gigantic project—how many years it will take to fill the inland sea by means of a canal of given breadth and depth, conducting to it the waters of the Mediterranean; the nature of the difficulties to be surmounted, and other practical speculations—may be learned from a pamphlet of great ability and completeness* by Le Commandant Roudaire, with illustrative maps, and a preface by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps. It gives the reader, who takes any interest in the scheme, a mass of information which evidently cannot be more than alluded to here.

The realization of the new inland sea will cost, of course, a considerable sum, which is estimated at six millions sterling; but it will be infinitely better spent money

than the thousands of pounds wasted on Arctic expeditions, for instance, with scarcely any other end or object to boast of than the danger, almost the certainty, incurred of condemning successive crews of brave and able men to cruelly prolonged torture and miserable death.

It will be worth paying a trifle of cash (if an invitation is not to be had) for a ticket to the grand stand, which ought to be erected at the point where the water from the Mediterranean first gushes and pours into the chott Rharsa, and gradually floods it, if only to witness the surprise and consternation caused amongst the unseen, and perhaps unsuspected, inhabitants of the swamp. The salt, to which they are acclimatized, will not kill many of the creatures belonging and peculiar to the fauna of the chotts, but a continuous deluge of water most certainly will, unless they speedily shift their quarters. It will be every one for himself, and a ducking take the hindmost. What a capital opportunity it will offer to zoological collectors! Only those spectators who are afraid of creepy-crawlies, of snakes and lizards, frogs and toads—nay, of rats, mice, and unknown wee beasts—will be wise to secure a seat well raised above the path of the startled emigrants; for there will be such a scampering *saute qui peut* as is not often seen at a sitting. But the true zoologist is afraid of nothing. He will handle a porcupine as coolly as if it were an eider-down pillow, and face a laughing hyena with a defiant smile.

And when the sea is filled up to high-water mark, what a capital fishpond, winter sanitarium, and yachting station it will make! Too far distant from its parent, the greater sea, to be resorted to as a harbor of refuge, it is sure, nevertheless, to be frequented by trading vessels to carry off the produce of its banks, which will eventually be dotted with groves of date and cocoanut palms, clumps of olive-trees, patches of bananas, and other tropical fruits. Hotels, perhaps towns, will spring up on picturesque and eligible sites; luxurious house-boats will float in its most sheltered and shady creeks. The inflowing stream will rapidly stock it with shoals of fish, marine crustaceans, molluscs, seaweeds, and their germs, on which a host of creatures feed. Turbot, tunny, soles, mullet, gurnards, fishing-frogs or anglers, and such like piscine dainties, will increase and multiply. With saffron and onions from the garden-plot at hand, oil from the tree, and a haul or two in the live fish-box, the Marseillais epicure, out

* La Mer Interieure Africaine, Paris, Imprimerie de la Société Anonyme des Publications Périodiques. 13-15, Quai Voltaire.

for a holiday, will come and eat as good a bouillabaisse as he could get at home.

Prophets of evil predict that by the continual inflow of Mediterranean water (already saltier than the ocean) to supply the continual loss by evaporation, the inland sea, gradually growing saltier and saltier, will eventually become one solid mass of crystallized salt—the biggest block of rock salt in the world. To this, we can only say that it will take a very, very long time to do it, and that we cannot tell what may happen between this and then. That a change of climate will occur is inevitable. The loss by evaporation may be, partially at least, replaced by rains. Salt also evaporates, when in company with vapor, as well as water; which any one may test and ascertain by licking his lips after passing through a sea fog. In any case, barrenness for barrenness, things will be no worse than they were before—better even, by the complete suppression of marsh miasma and the cultivation of the Djerid chott.

But M. Ferdinand de Lesseps assures us that the inland sea will be perfectly safe from silting or salting up for the next thousand or fifteen hundred years—which guarantee is a sufficiently lengthened term for any human enterprise. Of course he does not reckon upon earthquakes or other abnormal geological phenomena. A more serious matter is to consider what profits and advantages may be reasonably expected from the completion of the work.

The first will arise from a zone of land surrounding the inland sea, and conceded by the State to the company which undertakes to execute the project. This land, formed by the drying up of very fertile mud, but completely unproductive in consequence of drought, would soon acquire considerable value from the modified climate due to the presence of the new-made sea. It is well known that, in the region of the oases, when water is abundant enough for cultivation of the soil to be possible, every cultivated acre gives a net revenue of twenty pounds a year. An idea may thence be formed of the profits realizable by the company from the lands conceded. Next comes the felling of timber in the forests on the south slope of the Aures, the privilege of cutting which is demanded for ninety-nine years. The forests of Amar Khaddon and Chechar, for instance, covering an area of more than two hundred thousand acres, are filled with trees of great age and handsome dimensions. But nothing can be done with them at present, through the

absolute want of means of communication. And yet, if only for the sake of maintaining those forests in a healthily productive state, periodical thinnings would be beneficial. The inland sea would make that possible, since they are distant from it only eighteen miles. Moreover, it is certain that the forests themselves will benefit largely by the modified climate. There can be no doubt that the aqueous emanations floating in the air will counteract the drought with which the sirocco periodically afflicts them.

Then come the fisheries of the inland sea, whose rich yield may be absolutely counted on, from the example of the bitter lakes along the course of the Suez Canal. Those lakes, completely dry before the opening of the canal, have become exceedingly full of fish, in spite of their extra briny water, consequent on the dissolution of the crystallized salt which lay at the bottom of their bed. It would seem that this excess of salt has even an attraction for many fish, for they abandon Lake Timsah, which receives the overflow of the fresh-water canal, and is consequently less salt, and migrate in mass to the Bitter Lakes, which are distant sixty miles from the Mediterranean, and only eighteen from the Red Sea. But it is remarkable that nearly all those fish are Mediterranean species. The length, therefore, of the canal from the Gulf of Gabes will prove no hindrance to the stocking of the inland sea with fish.

As an estimate of the probable profits of the fisheries, it may be stated that the fishing of Lake Mensaleh, whose surface is relatively small, is let for eighty thousand pounds a year. The tenant, a native Egyptian, gets a good deal of money out of it, although the work is very badly done. Certain species of fish, after their roe has been extracted to make a sort of caviare called *boutargue*, are thrown away, and so yield absolutely nothing, whereas oil at least might be obtained from them, and afterwards manure possessing the qualities of guano.

Besides which, the chott Djerid is covered at certain points with layers of crystallized salt, which render it a vast natural salt mine. The railway which the company will lay down alongside the canal of supply, as soon as the works are fairly commenced, will permit the immediate working, almost without expense, of these immense quantities of salt, whose whiteness and purity are quite exceptional.

The new inland African sea would also give to Algeria, and thereby to France, a

secure frontier of the greatest political and military importance. One thing, however, is clear—namely, that this sea, if realized, will benefit very many persons besides its projectors and its executors.

From The Saturday Review.
THACKERAY'S AUTOGRAPHS.

THE art of imitating other people's hand-writings is no doubt fascinating for its own sake, as well as not unfrequently a source of considerable profit. In its ordinary commercial applications it is naturally objectionable to bankers and sometimes to the widow and orphan. The vulgar forger, however, is like a parasitical insect—one of the regular evils of life which we can anticipate and guard against. When we catch him we crack him, and need say no more about it. At times, however, a man applies talents which might have won thousands in the City to a less profitable but less dangerous trade. Instead of forging notes he forges salable documents. Mr. James Payn is at this moment doing his best to remind the public of one famous case of this kind. All Shakespearian students know what an amount of trouble has been given at a much later period by a skilful fabrication of apparently historical papers. It is a curious psychological problem to account for such an application of great knowledge and industry when there is so little prospect of compensation in any form, even if detection should be escaped. There is no such difficulty in accounting for a petty branch of the trade which seems to flourish, and which certainly requires, as we shall see, little beyond manual dexterity. Collectors of autographs are aware in a general way that they do not always get genuine articles. A few facts which happen to have come under our notice in regard to one particular author in whose manuscripts we have taken an interest may put some people on their guard, and are a curious illustration of the present state of an obscure occupation—fitted for the many young gentlemen who can read and write, but have a difficulty about entering overcrowded professions.

Thackeray, as our readers probably know, wrote a remarkably beautiful, regular, and characteristic hand. Perhaps its regularity makes forgery the more interesting. At any rate, during the last few years some person (or persons) has acquired the art of reproducing this hand

with considerable closeness. One difficulty, however, must have immediately presented itself in the way of turning his talents to account. Though it is comparatively easy to write Thackeray's hand, it is not altogether so easy to reproduce his style. The artist (if we may assume his identity), first evaded this by a simple device. He copied one of Thackeray's shorter essays, and sold the copy as the original MS. Here, however, he came into awkward collision with facts. It happened that the original MS. was in safe hands, and that its authenticity could be established beyond a doubt. The purchaser of the sham judiciously applied in the proper quarter, and the imposition was exposed. From fear, perhaps, of a similar difficulty, our artist next resolved upon the composition of an original letter. His first experiment, however, showed a simplicity which yet did not, strange as it may appear, defeat its purpose. He took the first piece of literature which came to hand and copied it out, being apparently of opinion that what one author had written for one purpose might be written by any author for any purpose. The result was a remarkable letter from Thackeray to the following effect:—

DEAR JOHN,—

The Normans were particularly fond of hunting, and William took so much delight in this sport that he formed a hunting-ground for himself, called the New Forest, near his favorite residence at Winchester. Severe forest-laws were introduced, from which the game-laws of the present day had their origin.

Yours affectionately,

W. M. THACKERAY.

This remarkable specimen of Thackeray's graceful epistolary style, plunging *in medias res* and out again with such careless felicity, found a purchaser. Perhaps, however, the artist had reason to think that the internal evidence was not so convincing as it might be, or that the composition was defective in interest. He accordingly went a little further afield. Another letter of Thackeray's presently turned up, which ran somewhat as follows:

DEAR THOMAS,—

There is certainly an interest and a charm about old London, its crowded busy streets, its ancient churches and buildings, and narrow lanes and passages, with quaint names, of which we dwellers in the stucco suburbs have no conception. There is the river, with its wondrous freight, and the busy docks, where stores of strange goods are lying, that bewilder one as one gazes.

Yours ever,

W. M. THACKERAY.

Now, although there was a certain abruptness about the sentences so tacked on to the beginning and end, the style had something of the true Thackeray flavor. The proprietor rejoiced in his possession of this characteristic fragment until one day he found the very same words in an article republished from the *Cornhill* by Thackeray's daughter. He puzzled over the problem thus presented. Had the daughter appropriated the father's writing; or the father composed letters by copying a bit from his daughter? The solution of this difficulty was discovered by a proper application, showing that our artist had so far profited by experience as to appropriate at least a piece of work such as Thackeray might himself have composed. He had, however, now to reflect that even the most eminent authors may be expected when they are writing letters to do something else than fasten a "Dear Sir" and a "W.M.T." to the end and beginning of a miscellaneous fragment of reflection. He boldly proceeded in due time to compose such letters as commended themselves to his intelligence. Thackeray, he reflected, was a humorist and an editor. Obviously, therefore, he would occasionally write something funny, and at times would give good advice to a brother author. A series of letters was accordingly manufactured, some of which had the honor of appearing—without a hint of any doubts of their authenticity—in a journal which, whatever faults it may have, is not excessively stern in its rejection of hitherto unedited materials likely to create public curiosity. In one of the funny letters, Thackeray wrote to a friend suffering under some eye disease; he recommended his correspondent to have his eyes taken out, well washed, and put back again, adding that if they were turned inwards they would command a good view of the patient's internal economy. The letter of advice to an author was of such a kind as it is not impossible to suppose that the artist might have himself received from some much-tried editor. It was a sharp recommendation to the supposed correspondent to give up writing, and look out for a place as light porter. This letter, it may be noticed, was sufficiently passable to excite comments in other quarters, and a disparaging comparison of Thackeray's temper as an editor with that of Dickens. The appearance of the letters, however, was presently followed by a letter from Mrs. Ritchie. She did not recognize her father's style. Indeed, she thought it surprising that

other people should not be struck by the difference between these compositions and her father's known writing. Though pestered, as he has told the world, by unreasonable contributors, he was not simply brutal in his replies; and, though he is generally admitted to have had some sense of humor, he was not given to boisterous schoolboy buffoonery. Careful critics profess to be able to discover a certain refinement in his playful writing, which is not evident in this facetiousness about bad eyes. However, an intelligent public is suspicious of mere arguments from internal evidence. Critics disagree; and some people might attribute the facetiousness about the eyes to the author of "The Snob Papers" and "Vanity Fair." Luckily the ingenious artist had committed an oversight. The letters were dated; the dates were inconsistent with historical facts; and one in particular was dated "Kensington, W., 1849," a period at which the postal districts were not as yet in existence. The fact was decisive even to the bluntest of perceptions.

We need hardly point the moral of this little story. The artist has evidently improved with time. He may attain an even higher pitch of skill. He may copy a letter from some one capable of writing a style not impossible for Thackeray, and he may avoid the little blunders to which attention has been publicly called. The manual part of his work shows some skill, and it might be difficult to disprove the letters on that ground alone. Some literary resurrection-man may hereafter come into possession of such documents, and publish them after the precedent of the letters attributed to Shelley. It is bad enough very often to have the genuine letters of a great man published; but at least it is desirable to guard against spurious imitations of professional forgers. Only the other day an illustration was given in the life of Mr. Whittier of the kind of legend which may pass current amongst the stupid part of the public. A circumstantial story of how Thackeray fuddled himself at his club in company with Whittier (whom, as it happens, he had never seen, and who has never been in England) has, it seems, been going the rounds of the American press. The story was repeated only to show its utter impossibility; but such stories may be circulated by the unscrupulous penny-a-liner without the contradiction. When "Jane Eyre" was a new book, one of our most eminent reviews did not scruple to give currency to the impossible story that its author was

a discarded governess of Thackeray's, who had stood for Becky Sharpe, and revenged herself by a portrait of Thackeray as Rochester. The smallest knowledge of the facts suffices, of course, to destroy such fictions for all intelligent readers. They show, however, how rapidly a legendary halo of fiction grows up round any eminent name; and though, happily, the forger is seldom clever enough to be armed at all points, we can only say that the most absurd fictions are finally exploded. If a man has the luck to tell a probable tale, it may thrive for a long time; indeed, every one who has looked into the anecdote literature about great

men of remoter periods knows that a presumption is against the truth of any anecdote not resting upon indisputable first-hand evidence. Shakespeare has been accused of drunkenness as well as Thackeray, and we cannot now cross-examine the witnesses or test their means of information. If our opportunities for investigation are now greater, so is the appetite for scandal; and it looks as if there would be room for a society for the preservation of established reputations as well as of ancient buildings, if the flood of libellous inventions is to be kept within bounds.

THE MARBLE HALL AT HATFIELD. — This magnificent apartment is probably unrivalled in the beauty of its oaken panels and carving. The noble and massive effect is increased by its exceeding loftiness. It fills two storeys of the north front, and is lighted by two tiers of three windows each, and by two oriels at the upper end of the north side. The room is fifty feet long by thirty feet wide. An oaken wainscot, which runs round two sides, rises as high as the top of the chimney-piece. The wainscot is plainly panelled, and is without ornament of any kind. This simple yet bold and free treatment of the wood is incomparably effective. Warm, rich, and massive, the dusky oak most exquisitely reflects the ever-varying shades of light. On the southern side of the room the wall-space between the wainscot and the ceiling is filled up by some clear and delicate Gobelins, with deep, effective borders. But it is to its carved oak screen and its two galleries that the Marble Hall owes most of its fame. The screen is at the western end, and partitions the room from the lobby outside. It is divided by richly carved pilasters into compartments filled with slightly enriched panels surmounted by an openwork fan ornament. The large folding doors, with their bold and sweeping arch, are identically treated. Above the screen, and projecting slightly from it, runs the Visitors' Gallery. The front presents a wealth of carving, modelled on the same lines as the screen, but richer and more fantastic. The plain shields of the two compartments beneath the apertures, for visitors to watch the diners below, are foils to the delicate arabesques and the fanciful tracery of the divisions which flank them. An enlargement of the fan ornament of the screen, surmounted by a bold and massive cornice, completes this delightful piece of artistic woodwork. At the opposite or eastern end of the hall is a Minstrels' Gallery, which, having twelve open compartments, hardly presents so good an op-

portunity for the art of the decorator. Nevertheless it is richly panelled, and the panels are filled with delicate arabesques. Here are introduced the heraldic lions of the Cecils, bearing cartouche-shaped shields containing the emblazoned arms of the marquessate.

Magazine of Art.

SUPERSTITION IN SHELAND. — All fishing communities are superstitious, but the Shetlander has an additional title to be so in his Norse descent. Old myths still linger in out-of-the-way localities, influencing the motions and moulding the conduct of many a fisher family. A belief in trows, elves, mermen, and mermaids is universal. Wraiths and portents receive implicit credence. A woman washing her husband's clothes in a burn sees his trousers fill with water, and infers from that an intimation of his approaching death. Spey wives and dealers in charms and incantations still ply a roaring trade. There are drunken old hags in Lerwick itself who earn their livelihood by imposing upon the credulity of ignorant sailors and silly servant girls. The influence of the evil eye is as well known in Shetland as in other parts of the world. But to rank an evil tongue in the same category of malefic potency is a refinement in superstition unknown to the folk-lore of the majority of people. "Nobody must praise a child or anything they set a value on, for if anything evil afterwards befalls it," this will be attributed to the tongue that spoke of it. This was called "forespeaking," and persons so forespoken could only be loosed from their enchantment by being washed in a water of which the concoction is kept a profound secret. A relic of Popery seems to linger in the superstition which formerly restrained some of the lower classes from eating or drinking on Sunday till after divine service.

Good Words.

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